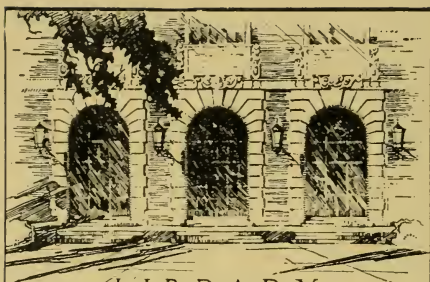


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MIRIAM SEDLEY;

OR,

THE TARES AND THE WHEAT.

A TALE OF REAL LIFE.

BY

LADY BULWER LYTTON.

Heart—Affluence in discursive talk,
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

* * * * *
And Manhood fused with female grace,
In such a sort the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked with thine,
And find its comfort in thy face.

ALFRED TENNYSON'S *In Memoriam*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MIRIAM SEDLEY.

CHAPTER I.

ON our return home, Mademoiselle inquired if my uncle was out, and hearing that he was in the library with Belzoni, she gave us leave to go to him, and I was to say that she was *très contente de moi*, neither more, nor less, and that he would know what that meant. Accordingly I ran in, singing my own praises, and, like most persons who do so, was taken at my own valuation; for who can know our merits half so well as ourselves, and if we don't proclaim them, how can we expect the world to take the trouble of finding them out? Reputation is the only trumpet that heralds worth, or talent, and unless we blow the key note, others seldom sound it for us.

After we had kissed my uncle, and asked Belzoni for Bloom, the eagle, the albatross, and the petrel,

they resumed their conversation, which appeared to have been about Philip Vavasour, for my uncle sat knitting his brow, as was his wont when he felt uncomfortable, or perplexed as to how to render some one a service, or confer a kindness without being found out, or, as when it sometimes happened, he had taken the liberty of asking people to his own house, and a great domiciliary battle had to be fought, in order to vanquish my aunts into receiving them properly.

“The whole thing is wrong,” said my uncle, while Belzoni seemed to listen with the eye of a hawk to every word he uttered. “The boy is a fine boy, and has plenty of intellect, which I am sorry to perceive has been forced in a hot-bed, without any corresponding training, pruning, or fostering of his moral qualities; and intellectual pre-eminence, without the ballast of moral solidity, and the genial warmth of the affections, becomes too often nothing more than the most subtle, astute, and remorseless want of principle, which leaves no vice unexhausted, and no virtue unassumed. Now it is evident to me, that this poor boy has had that great germ of all evil—pride—nurtured in him—I mean the false Lucifer; pride that makes the pronouns *I* and *my* the axis upon which all things turn. *My* family! and, *my* honour! And with such persons, honour does not so much consist in abstaining from wrong doing, as in resenting the slightest accusation of it. It is evident he has been

taught to despise his mother because she is poor through the infamy of his father ; while his father's family, from being rich, though worthless in every sense of the word, are the gods of his idolatry. For as his uncle, Dingly Vavasour, pays for him at Eton, according to our English tariff of morality, he is the person the boy is taught wholly and solely to look up to, honour, and obey ; and as a proof of how well the system works, it was only the other day that I was imploring him, for his own sake, to try and recompense his poor mother by his own kindness, worth, and, above all, single-mindedness, for a little of the cruel injuries she had sustained at the hands of his father ; a few of which, thinking him now old enough to know the truth, I then detailed to him, winding up with an exordium to avoid his father's and uncle's fatal vice of gambling."

"Well," interrupted Belzoni, "and what did he say ?"

"Drew up in a way that would have been highly ridiculous in a brat of his age, had it not been revolting and disgusting, and said : ' Sir, you seem to forget that you are speaking of *my family* ! ' "

"The contemptible little wretch !" broke in Belzoni. "So that was the only feeling the recital of his mother's injuries elicited from him ?"

"The only one," sighed my uncle.

"But how comes it," resumed Belzoni, "that he is so completely under the control of his father's family,

and beyond that of his mother? for, generally, even a husband's omnipotent tyranny ceases with his life."

"Don't you know that money is power?"

"Hah!" said Belzoni, drawing a long breath, and tightly folding his arms.

"And," pursued my uncle, "when Lady Dora Capel forced her poor daughter Mary to marry that unmitigated wretch, Edgar Vavasour, she thought him heir to Marmiondale, as, indeed, he was, being his father's favourite; but his vices carrying him off prematurely, and the Vavasours being of that amiable temperament which seems to like wickedness for wickedness' sake, even more than for any fancied advantages that may accrue to them through its honourable means, old Vavasour, when he died, left Marmiondale (it being unentailed) to his son Dingly, leaving it optional with him to bequeath it to young Philip Vavasour, his nephew, upon the express proviso, that the boy was to be wholly and solely under his control, and that he never did anything to offend him. Here was the last and worst blow of all to his poor mother; for, living in a cottage in Pembroke-shire, upon a beggarly jointure of £300 a year, she felt she had no right to exert the authority the law, as a free woman, then allowed her of sole control over her son; as, by so doing, she should be marring his worldly prospects in every way, as she could not afford to give him even the education of a gentleman."

"Not, certainly, if a public school is considered a

sine qua non of such an education; but she was wrong, she should have thought more of her son's soul, and less of his worldly career," said Belzoni.

"She *was* wrong," said my uncle, with a deep sigh; "and, poor soul, she is likely to pay dearly for it, as all do who err from want of judgment, and not from evil intent; the latter generally thrive, as, to do the devil justice in this world, he certainly takes care of his own. But I fear poor Mary's bitter trials are not ended yet; for this boy has been trained in the proper school, to perpetuate them as part of the Vavasour code, which he appears already fully to have imbibed, is that women are mere domestic machines, only fit to be kicked and incarcerated while young, and left to starve when old; and next to his defunct gambler of a father, and his living gambler of an uncle, upon the strength of his being the heir of Marmiondale, he evidently thinks himself the most important personage on the face of the whole universe."

"Oh, then, if that is the tenure upon which he holds his grandeur, I advise the young gentleman to lose no time in reforming his manners, or rather his morals; and, above all, in retrenching his pride," said Belzoni, with a curious expression of face, as he hastily put on his gloves, and was preparing to take his departure, in which, however, he was interrupted, by Colonel Clavering being announced.

"Don't go, for heaven's sake! my dear Belzoni," said my uncle, pressing him back into the chair; "it

is that puritanical fellow, Clavering, a pretty colonel of engineers, truly; only fancy, last Sunday, having had intelligence from Boswell, that four French privateers had been cruising about all night. I sent off an express to Clavering, to throw up some additional fortifications, and have all the guns of the martello towers double-manned; and would you believe it, the fellow positively refused, because it was Sunday; as I sent him word if the enemy should come, I hoped he would be the first ass that fell into the ditch, and that none of his pharisaical tribe would pick him out, because it was the Sabbath."

"I am come, Sir George," said Colonel Clavering, now entering and booing, as only Scotchmen can boo, "to explain this leetle meesunderstanding aboot the fortifications your axcellency wished thrown up, they are noo done; but whan I first recaved the order, you ken it was the Laird's day, in whach we are expressly enjoined to do nae monner o' wark; and ye are aware, Sir George, that I hold Calvinistic doctrines."

"Perfectly aware of it, Sir," replied my uncle, backing his chair, and rubbing down the shin of his right leg, as it lay crossed over his left knee; "but I hold, that in an engineer at least, *good works* are as essential as *faith*."

"Ha, ha, ha! capital!" laughed Belzoni.

While the matter-of-fact Celt merely replied:—

"That great mon, John Calvin, preached a deferent doctrine."

“Pooh, pooh, Sir,” cried my uncle, taking a polemically vehement pinch of snuff; “don’t talk to me of Calvin; he was not a great man by any means, but only a bad, a very bad man, Sir: as, indeed, were most of those who acted

‘As if religion were intended,
For nothing else but to be mended.’

And if you have not read Jeremy Taylor, Sir, I have, and remember that he says, and says truly: ‘All the ages of the Church were extremely curious to observe, when any new teachers did arise, what kind of lives they lead, it was generally found that they were very wicked; and God never makes use of wicked instruments to reform his Church.’ And look, Sir, at the life and death of Calvin: but his tenets are enough for me, as they are not only written in blood, but in fire.”

“A weel,” said Clavering, turning up his eyes in solemn horror, “I neever heerd ony one venture upon a word agin Calvin befure.”

“Then, Sir,” said my uncle, “you never could have read Audin, Berthellier, Gruet, Gentiles, Bolsec, Ami, Perrin, Francis Favre, and Servetus, with hosts of others, and consequently can know very little about the matter, or you would know what a disgrace Calvin was to humanity and still more so to religion; for as Dr. Trevern says, ‘he also crushed the liberties of the people, as well as Luther, but in a more

insidious manner. He robbed them of their freedom in the name of liberty (a common trick with most Reformers of the age). A foreigner, he insinuated himself into Geneva, and serpent-like, coiled himself round the very heart of its republic, nor did he relax his hold as long as he lived. Woe to him who did not uncover at the approach of Calvin; he was fined. Woe to him who dared to contradict, or even to differ from him; he was brought before the Consistory, and menaced with excommunication. Woe to the girl who presented herself to be married with a bunch of flowers in her cap. Woe to him who danced on the day of his wedding; he was imprisoned for three days. Woe to the young married lady, if she wore shoes according to the then fashion of Berne; she was publicly reprimanded. Hence is derived the Swiss saying of, 'Woe to the cat that catches a mouse on a Sunday; woe to the spider who lays holds of a fly, however hungry he be, on the seventh day; and woe, woe to the citizen who shall take a walk with his family on the Sabbath!' In short, the seeds of Calvin's twenty-four years' theocracy at Geneva—were scaffolds, swords, fire, and faggots; and if as much blood did not flow during his reign of terror, as there did during the French revolution, it was no fault of his, but because the population was smaller; and to this day, the Genevese reap the fruits of his sumptuary laws in their intense parsimony and hypocrisy; and I doubt if even his horrible and

fiendish persecution of Michael Servetus, coupled with his final butchery of him, was more atrocious than the crimes he enacted through his domiciliary police, who, through the most unimaginable treachery, wormed themselves into the privacy of every family, in order to betray their secrets to Calvin, whose punishments were always as summary as they were unjust. Though Gibbon says, speaking of his murder of the Spaniard, 'I am more deeply scandalized at the single execution of Servetus, than at the hecatombs which have blazed at auto-da-fès in Spain and Portugal.'"

"Hoot! Sar," interrupted Colonel Clavering, "what is it ye bring forward agin Colvin, a pack of ootlandish names that I naver heered tell on; ond thin o' the top o' them ye steck Eddard Gubbon, the anfidel, not to say atheist, as a croon."

"Well, if you don't like the authorities I have already cited," said my uncle, "you can apply to Dr. Spalding, and Erasmus, for your friend's character."

"Ot all evants ye canna deny, that we owe the Raformation to him, Sar."

"But, indeed I do deny it; for what is called our Reformation, we owe to two almost equally bad men, Harry the Eighth, and his worthy bishop and coadjutor, Cranmer; and even the high church Protestants of his own day refused Calvin the title of demagogue which they gave to Christ, and Luther. Izchirner,

in his fanatical adulation, profanely calls our Saviour, Luther the First, but looks upon John of Noyon (as he calls Calvin) as ‘an usurper who made use of the people to crown himself.’ The Reformation had been already effected by the agency of Farel and Fremont (before Calvin’s arrival), and its course had been marked as elsewhere by pillage of the churches, seizure of church property, and destruction of works of art, by robbery, sacrilege, and massacre. And you might, as Dr. Spalding remarks, ‘have traced it by its effects, as you could have traced the march of an army of the Huns in the fifth century;’ but my chief quarrel with Calvin is: his master heresy, of having presumed to graft Fatalism upon Christianity, and by so doing endeavoured to mildew the sacred and universal balm of the atonement, by the rank blasphemy of predestination. However,” concluded my uncle, “if you would value it (which I assure you I do not), I shall be happy to give you a copy of the original edition, published in 1554 (the year after Servetus’s execution) of Calvin’s famous, or rather infamous work, “*De Hereticis Puniendis*.” I picked it up many years ago in a curiosity-shop, at Geneva, with its original old black embossed leather binding; and what may enhance its attractions to you is, that it was a present from Calvin to his valet, or at least his servant, Claude Petit Jean, as his master has written with his own wicked old hand in the fly-leaf.”

“Eh, I should indeed fale prood o’ possessing aine of John Colvin’s aine bookes that hod been in his

aine sacred hond; but unfortunately I dinna rade Latin, Sar."

"So much the better, for then it can do you no harm, so I'll give it you," said my uncle with a laugh, for fearing in his honest abhorrence of Calvin, that he had said something to hurt his (evidently very ignorant) disciple's feelings, he could not bear to dismiss him without trying in some way or other to make his parting feeling one rather of pleasure than of pain.

"Here it is," said he, stooping down, and drawing forth the ponderous old *tome*, "and I wish no poor sinner, whether heretic or orthodox, a greater punishment than to read it."

"I'm very much obleeged to your axcellency," cried the Calvinistic Colonel, clutching the gloomy-looking prize with a sort of grim enthusiasm, "ond I hove the honour of weeshing ye a goode day; ond I hop whan ye come oop to Fort Goliah, ye'll find the fortifications to your weesh."

"If I remember rightly, Colonel Clavering, you don't patronize French any more than Latin?" said my uncle, as the gaunt figure of the former strode towards the door.

"Na, I dinna ken ony of tham Popish tongues."

"Otherwise I would have asked you to come down to-night, as the Margravine of Anspach, with Monsieur de la Tour d'Auvergne, are going to give us some scenes from 'Tartufe.'"

"Eh!" cried Clavering, looking as aghast as if

the infernal regions had suddenly yawned before him, and Calvin himself had been stretching out his arms to receive him, "yar axcellency forgets that eet is contraire to my pranciples to see stage plays."

"Oh, I beg pardon," said my uncle, maliciously, "perhaps, then, Mrs. Clavering would like to come."

"The deil forbad; I dinna thenk (the Laird be praised) she's aver as much as hecred the name of a stage play."

"I understand," said my uncle,

" ' S'il faut qu'avec elle on joue au corbillon,
Et qu'on vient à lui dire à son tour : qu'y met-on ?
Je veux qu'elle réponde ; une tarte à la crème ;
Et un mot, qu'elle soit d'une ignorance extrême.' "

"If yer axcellency is talling me ony diractions about the fort, parehops you'll have the gudeness to repate them in Anglish."

"I have only this to say about the fort, Colonel Clavering, that if circumstances should compel me next Sunday to send you any further orders, they *must* be obeyed, or I shall be under the disagreeable necessity of reporting you at the Horse Guards, for I cannot allow you again to jeopard some thousands of the lives of his Majesty's subjects with impunity. I have passed over your conduct once, but don't reckon too much upon my folly, or you will find yourself mistaken, for I am something after the fashion of my

Lord Butler of Weston, in the time of William III, who was said to have been of exceeding good sense, though he seldom shewed it."

"Eh, ond God's commandments, Sir."

"I should, I hope, be the last to ask any one to infringe them," said my uncle. "And when, in all the Scriptures, you can point out to me one commandment that says, 'Thou shalt not do thy duty on the Sabbath,' or even one line in the Old or New Testament, which could be construed into its being wrong to do what is right of a Sunday, (unless, indeed, you choose to reject our Saviour's answer, and build your faith upon the Sadducees' query of 'Whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath;') when you can do this, but not till then, I shall think it my duty to let the enemy invade us on the Sabbath without resistance, or defence. Meanwhile, my dear Colonel Clavering, I will recommend for your consideration that passage of Thomas à Kempis, wherein he says: 'Blessed is that simplicity which leaveth the difficult ways of disputes, and goeth on in the plain and sure path of God's commandments.'"

Mr. Waltham now entering with some foolscap official document that he had been inditing, Colonel Clavering bood himself out of the room, muttering:

"Weel, weel, the Laird lighten yer darkness; for I believe if ye could see the right way, ye'd gang it."

"It will do very well," said my uncle, signing the paper he had just perused, and returning it to Mr. Waltham, who left the room with it.

"How wretched poor Waltham looks, even more miserable than the Calvinistic Colonel, who has nothing but fire and brimstone, and eternal punishment, in his head from morning till night," said Belzoni.

"Well, so I've remarked," replied my uncle, "ever since he returned from Fort Goliah this morning; I wonder whether Clavering could have bitten him: he seems quite rabid enough to have done so; I asked Waltham several times if anything was the matter, and he said no."

"Oh, that's not true," cried I, forgetting, in my zeal to have the deficit of the £50 made good, that he particularly desired my uncle might not be made acquainted with its loss.

"Why, Mirry," said the latter, "you are becoming a perfect Solomon, you seem to know everything, so pray have the goodness to tell us what is the cause of poor Waltham's suddenly having the Lamentations of Jeremiah tatooed all over his face, when every one else in the house is full of private theatricals and merry-making."

"Oh! but I wasn't to tell *you*, above all people," said I, looking my Uncle steadily in the face, as much as to say, do press me, and then I must tell you, for with a degree of sense far beyond my years,

I considered fifty pounds cheap at any amount of anger, if Mrs. Waltham would be placed in such distress by its loss.

"Well, if he has been doing wrong, or what I should think wrong, don't tell me," said my Uncle; "for I hate tell-tales, and indeed, child, you were wrong to hint at anything that can't, or ought not to be told, for that is almost as bad a breach of trust as telling it; indeed worse in one respect, as it leaves people to imagine all sorts of things."

"But he hasn't been doing wrong, or I shouldn't have told it."

"What makes him look so miserable, then?"

"He has been very unfortunate."

"Ah! my dear Miss Mirry," said Belzoni, bitterly, "when you grow a little older, the world will soon teach you, that being unfortunate is the greatest wrong that any one can be guilty of."

"If he has been only unfortunate, you ought to tell me, Mirry, for I might be of use to him."

"But he's afraid you'd be so very angry with him for his carelessness."

"Hang it! the puppy has not been losing or mislaying any of my papers, I hope?" said my Uncle.

"No, not your papers, but—"

"But what? out with it, since you have begun to tell."

"Will you promise not to be angry with poor Mr. Waltham though, if I tell you? for indeed it was

not his fault, it would never have happened if he could have helped it, so will you promise?"

"No, I never promise without knowing what I promise," interrupted my Uncle.

"Well, if you do scold him, will you promise to help him? you can do that."

"I never saw such a little Jew in my life," laughed my Uncle; "well, come, I suppose I must do that, or I shall never get at this mighty secret, that is, provided it is in my power to do so, for I am no conjuror, beyond the cards, and young gentlemen, like young ladies, have sometimes a strange hankering after impossibilities, and if he happens to want a squadron fitted out for the lunar regions, in quest of his lost wits, or to put in a claim for the reversion of some particular star, it would be quite impossible for me to assist him."

"Oh no! it's much easier than all that," said I, laughing, and I then related my meeting with Mr. Waltham on the stairs in the morning, his saying he did not know what his mother would do for the want of his fifty pounds, and our fruitless search for it on the ramparts.

"The careless puppy," said my Uncle, taking a pinch of snuff at railroad speed, and shutting down his snuff-box with great energy, as if to show how the fifty pounds ought to have been secured, and then it couldn't have blown away; "it's very odd there is no such thing as putting order, or business-like habits into

some people's heads, it's because he's so rich, I suppose, that he must go and convert fifty-pound notes forsooth into kites, or balloons upon the ramparts, whereas if he had taken his money down to the bank first, and sent it off to his mother, it could not have blown out of his pocket-book into the sea, which is of course what it has done; one way of making oceans of money, certainly. I have no toleration for such idiotic carelessness, none whatever!" and my Uncle got up, walked up and down, and thrust his hands into both his pockets, as if to assure his money that he would never be guilty of such unpardonable neglect towards it.

"Perhaps," suggested Belzoni, "my dear Sir George, you told him to go directly to Colonel Clavering's, and that that was the reason he did not take time to go to the bank with the money first, as you know the town is quite in a contrary direction to Fort Goliah?"

"Ah! may be so," said my Uncle, stopping suddenly short, and pulling his under-lip; "then at that rate I'm in some measure the cause of this piece of foolery; at all events, his poor mother and sister must not be let to suffer for it; and yet, I should like to punish the puppy, too." (I'm sure he would, he was so fond of punishing, and making people miserable!) And in order to do so, he walked over to a despatch-box that was on a chair in the window, and unlocking it with a key attached to his watch-chain, took out a leash of bank-notes.

“Tut, tut—how provoking!” said he, examining them; “not a £50 note amongst them; only £10 and £20; and I don’t like to send out for it, for fear that fellow, Waltham, should hear of it.”

Belzoni mechanically put his hand into his bosom, and half drew forth a pocket-book, which he as hastily thrust back, and suddenly starting up, held out his hand, and said:

“Give me those notes, and I’ll soon get them changed into one.”

“Oh, thank you, my dear Belzoni; how very kind of you! I’m sure it’s more than the fellow deserves.”

During Belzoni’s absence, my uncle employed the time in endeavouring to impress upon Grace and me the dreadful consequences of carelessness in all things, but more especially in money matters; and as he said so, we were quite willing to believe that such is the case, though I think he failed in practically illustrating this to us on that occasion, notwithstanding that he took the greatest pains to assure us, that had it not been for the sake of the poor women, he would have let that fellow, Waltham, starve in a jail, as he deserved to do, for his unpardonable carelessness; and when Belzoni returned, my uncle added, addressing me specially, and getting up a frown, by which he endeavoured to assume as great a degree of formidable ferocity as may be seen any day for asking, in that magnificent mezzotinto portrait of the Great Mogul, on the wrapper of our English playing-cards. He said, as he placed the £50 note on the floor, be-

tween the double-doors of the library and the study, in which no one had been, since Mr. Waltham had left it for his own office, on the other side of the lawn, in the morning,

“Now, Mirry, go and pick that up, that there may be a grain of truth in the lie you are going to tell—so you see there is no end to the evil consequences entailed by carelessness—and then take it to that careless puppy, Waltham, and say you picked it up. Mind you don’t say you found it, for you did not find it, as you saw me put it there; but tell him you picked it up between the two doors, and that he had better send it off to his mother immediately, before it goes out fishing with the other note; but take care you don’t give him an idea that I know anything of his abominable carelessness, or I should be obliged to dismiss him; for I should never do any good with those fellows, if I did not make them afraid of me.”

“Then I fear you never will do any good with them, at that rate,” said Belzoni, smiling.

“And I’m sure you never will with me,” said I, climbing up upon a chair, in order to throw my arms about his neck, and kiss his darling head; “for I never shall be afraid of you.”

“You are an impudent little puppy,” said he, kissing me, and putting me down, “not to treat your grand-uncle, and a Governor to boot, with more respect; and if I don’t see something wonderful to-night

from a certain pair of little red boots with gold spurs, that some one (I think it must have been your albatross, Belzoni) told me about, I shall have to send it to Colonel Clavering, next Sunday morning, to get the black-hole ready at Fort Goliah."

"Ah!" laughed Belzoni, "and if he has any gallantry in him—though that, I suppose, would be against his principles—he may serenade you with that verse from the 'Song of Solomon,' which says, 'I'm black, but comely.'"

Mademoiselle here sent to say, that it was six o'clock; and she wanted me to come to tea, and then to go and lie down. I told Grace to say I would come directly; and once more kissing my uncle and Belzoni, I rushed through the hall, and down the steps, across the lawn, as fast as I could run, till I reached Mr. Waltham's office. I found him with his elbows on the table, and his face buried in his handkerchief. Heaven forgive me! but as I was the bearer of good tidings, I thought I was entitled to the recompense of a sorry joke; so I put on a most dismal face, as I stood at the door. He looked round, and, hastily wiping his eyes, said:

"Thank you, my dear Miss Miriam; I knew you would not be able to find it."

"And why, pray," said I, advancing on tiptoe with my hands behind my back, "should I not be able to find it?"

"Oh, I, of course, only meant that no one could find

it, or I'm sure you've done all you could, and I'm very much obliged to you."

"Well, if you are so very much obliged to me for *not* finding it, I suppose you won't be at all obliged to me *for* finding it; which is lucky, as I can't stay to be thanked; so there it is," said I, laying it down on the table, and running back to the door.

"My dear Miss Miriam, is it possible? Where did you find it?" said he, clasping his hands, while his eyes sparkled with delight.

"Oh, I can't stay now, I'm in a great hurry," said I; "it was not on the ramparts though; I picked it up between the double doors of the library and study; pray send it off to your mother directly, for fear you should lose it again;" and so saying, I made him a military salute, *à la cracovienne*, knocked my heels together, though I had no spurs on, and vanished, before he had time to say another word. When I got up stairs, I complained of a very bad headache; so Mademoiselle de Guilleragues would not let me have any tea, but gave me some *eau de fleur d'oranger* in water, and sent me to bed, that I might sleep off my headache against the important events of the evening. I was soon asleep; and, after a terrible night-mare, wherein I thought Colonel Clavering, mounted upon a huge bat, with fiery wings, upon which were inserted, *de hereticis puniendis*, carried me off hither, thither, up, down, to the right first, then to the left, and then all round about, for he did not seem very

well to know where he was going, I was eventually flung off upon a cloud, cool and pleasant withal, where I beheld Lady Laura O'Shindy sitting—like “Rule Britannia”—explaining to a set of starving wretches the excellencies of universal philanthropy; and how pernicious it was to relieve individual distress, while Dermot (too dazzling for mortal eyes to behold, in a livery of one solid emerald, studded with stars, the celestial climax, in fact, of his earthly field of buttercups) was holding a large toadstool over her head, with one hand to screen her complexion from the sun, (supposed to be lurking about that neighbourhood on the look out for a glimpse of it) while with the other, he contrived to offer, with all the dexterity of a heavenly tay boy,* a silver cloud full of ethereal refreshments—such as *clair de lune gazeuse*—and vapour sandwiches, which Lady Laura discussed at the same time, with the elevating principle, and universal benevolence; yet, strange to say, the poor starving wretches, by whom she was surrounded, did not seem to grow a bit the fatter upon the goodness of *her* appetite and philosophical principles; till suddenly I saw a universal gladness pervade, like a burst of sunshine, the whole group, who began to scramble for sheafs of corn, amphoræ of wine, and nice warm fleecy clouds, in which they wrapped themselves, and clapped their hands rejoicing; when,

* There is a tract published entitled “The Heavenly Footman,” then why not “The Heavenly Tay boy?”

upon looking up far into a higher and brighter heaven, I beheld my Uncle Paulett, silent and still, with his Great Mogul face on, showering down all these things. I did not know a line of Milton then, and don't know many now, for I don't admire him, or if I had, it is probable that even in a dream, I might have said to the angels:

“ There entertain him, all the saints above,
In solemn troops and sweet societies,
That sing—and singing in their glory move—
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.”

But even in youth, one can't dream always, so Nelly just at this juncture awoke me; and although a reality, and a most substantial one, I must do her the justice to say, that she looked big and bright as a harvest moon; when she announced to me that it was tin o'clock, and time to put on my “bootsh and schpursh; for if iver any one rode de foremosht horshe, it wash I, that wud do it that night.”

CHAPTER II.

THOUGH Nelly awoke me *à-propos de bottes*, I was not to don my Hungarian dress till I reached the little dressing-room of the theatre. It was between the acts when I went down with Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, or rather “Tartufe” was just over, and the Margravine having, of course, received as much applause as if she had been Mademoiselles Mars and Duchênois in one, had returned to the stage, which was also the state box, and judging from her appearance it would certainly seem that it was in vain “Tartufe” had said to her :

“Cachez ces appas que je ne saurais voir.”

As she was really more *décolletée* than ever, I suppose on the principle of having no concealments from our friends; or, perhaps, from a kind of consideration for the little people of ———, whom she

might think would like to see as much as possible of so great a personage. It must be confessed that "British females" in the War used to make most terrible displays; but it may be presumed that it was only as a set-off to Napoleon's *chère à canon!* Be this as it might, it is no wonder that the "British grenadiers" are considered the bravest men in the world, since they never quailed before either; and of the two, I should think the English veteran petticoat battalion must have been the most formidable.

I myself prefer the plan of the ancients to these public displays; the former had temples for their antiquities, where everything curious in nature and art was arranged, and in a measure concealed, though we learn from Pliny that these poor people were unacquainted with the modern art of preserving animal substances. Suetonius indeed says that the Emperor Augustus had a collection of natural curiosities in his palace, though private collections were then unknown. So far, on the present occasion, thanks to the Margravine, Lady Laura O'Shindy, the Miss Cookes and Abrahams, my uncle resembled the Emperor Augustus; and could Theophrastus, Aristotle, and Apuleius, only have waited patiently till

"Time, always delighted to dig and to delve,
Had scooped out the year eighteen hundred and twelve,"

they might have spared themselves that infinity of

trouble and danger which they underwent in the collection and pursuit of natural curiosities, and have found them all ready collected to their hands, and in a high state of preservation. It seems that my aunts and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had had a violent dispute, in which however, with my uncle's assistance, the latter had carried the day. The matter at issue was this: my aunts, with their usual good taste and judgment, had wished my imitations to be given *pro bono* on the stage, merely omitting the stuttering Brigade-Major, and Lady Laura (the latter, by the bye, being my *chef-d'œuvre*).

The two aides-de-camp being young and handsome, with nothing ridiculous beyond a little affectation, which is always so, were to remain in the programme. But Mademoiselle, who knew the world thoroughly, and therefore also knew, that although one ought no more to judge of a person's whole nature by his conduct on any one particular occasion than one ought to decide upon the climate of a country from having only for one hour inhaled its temperature, yet is it on such data that the equitable world in its perspicuity always does decide; and she had no idea of my sowing hosts of future enemies perhaps, merely for the sake of gratifying one of my aunt's many caprices. It was therefore at length decided that this exhibition should be strictly private, and not take place till the next morning, when they and the Margravine were *en petit comité*. Wise Mademoiselle de Guilleragues! well did

she know that time, that greatest of all usurers, invariably takes from us more renown than he ever has lent us; but what she did not know, nor could not anticipate, was how my Aunt Marley in future years never ceased upbraiding me with that unlucky *cracovienne*, and kindly deploring to the whole world, especially to the male portion of it, who were silly enough to want to marry me, the terrible boldness and *à plomb* of a girl of nine years old, who could dance on a public stage; for into such was this poor little theatre, made to contain at most a hundred-and-twenty persons, converted by the magic of wilful misrepresentation.

The play being over, the stage was preparing with all the dilatory dispatch of private theatricals (or public ones in the House of Commons) for Fiametta's bolero; and therefore to avoid all suspicion, as like the "onion atoms" in Sydney Smith's salad, I was "unsuspected to animate the whole," it was deemed expedient that Grace and I should appear in the stage-box, and only leave it as if wishing its occupants good night; this being, as I before said, also the state-box, it was fitted up with a great deal of boudoir luxury, including plenty of looking-glasses for my aunts, so that they might (at least in public) indulge in pleasing reflections.

The Margravine, her *dame de compagnie*, the Dukes of Brunswick and Bouillon, Lady Paulett, my aunts, my uncle, his two aides-de-camp, and two German ones of the Duke of Brunswick's, at the back of the

box, completely filled it, while opposite, in grim array, sat the Cookes and Abrahams, and Lady Laura O'Shindy, with her tay boy standing behind her chair; for like Madame Duval with Monsieur Dubois in "Evelina" she "never went nowhere without him." And indeed it was part of the religious persuasion of the —ites to believe that had Lady Laura been going to a ball or dinner at Carlton House, she would have told "Sam," or whoever her tay boy might have been for the time being (Dermot as yet not having taken office), "to be sure and ask if he and the umbrella could be of any use;" so that the jibes, jests, and affronts which poor Sam canvassed by this means, would incur too great an expenditure of time and paper to relate. Suffice it to say that he devoted the whole of his energies to eating and drinking, and had a curious and unprecedented knack of sleeping at all sorts of extraordinary times, and in all sorts of curious places, without however losing his perpendicular: for he could do his sleeping quite as well standing, walking, or masticating, as he could sitting down or reclining; and as when sleep overtook him in strange nooks and corners, it was at once difficult to find and to catch him, it was therefore supposed to be on that account that Lady Laura never lost sight of him, but always had him "dangling like some rare carcanet" about her person; though truth compels me to confess that he was not quite so ornamental, as he was exceedingly obese, dark, and shiny; in short very like a hippo-

potamus in figure and face, except that, instead of his own skin, he wore Lady Laura's field of buttercups livery, the yellow plush inexpressibles of which having unfortunately been made for his much taller predecessor, instead of confining themselves to their legitimate sphere—the knees—made themselves ridiculous (as all do who try to go beyond it) by hovering with the most unprincipled laxity about the calves, which being of a modest and retiring nature gave them no encouragement, but on the contrary a *flat* denial.

Now it so happened that on this eventful evening, "Sam's" slumbers were doomed to be cruelly disturbed by Lady Laura's wit, at least by her wit according to Pope, who asserts that, "a wit's a feather," at which rate she, who had never been guilty of wit before, now sported two wits in the shape of two feathers, one white, the bridal plumage of the ostrich; the other black, no doubt its widow's cap. One of these feathers drooped to the left, and the other to the right, so that Lady Laura was like that peculiar Indian people whose shadows fall both ways; and had it been only the shadows, as there were no Peter Schlemihls present, they might have fallen, and lain where they fell; but in sleep, strange notions come into people's heads, and "Sam," who had hitherto held on behind his mistress's chair, and slept through, or rather in spite of, all obstacles, was suddenly roused by that A B C of chivalry, the spirit of self-defence; for Lady Laura, in explaining to the eldest Miss Cooke the ele-

vating principle, used so much gesticulation that with the white feather she tickled Miss Cooke's moustache, while with the black one she had the misfortune to exasperate Sam's nose. I say misfortune, for that young gentleman not being wide awake, thought that some gigantic moth had mistaken his very flaming nose for the kitchen candle, and rushed incontinently into it; and he so resented the outrage, that raising his clenched fist, he aimed such a wide-of-the-mark blow, that it fell like a sledge-hammer upon poor Lady Laura's long, interminable, and lance-like nose, from which a crimson tide instantly flowed.

Being opposite, we had a perfect view of the whole scene; while Lord Frederick (who amid much ill-suppressed laughter, was dispatched to inquire after Lady Laura) observed that he should give Sam half-a-guinea for having performed a miracle, as it was the first time Lady Laura's *claret* had ever been made to flow; and my Aunt Bell, who, *en désespoir de cause*, had taken to quizzing Captain Dapperwit about the eldest Miss Cooke, asked him why he did not rush over to inquire after the "hair-breadth 'scape" of her moustache.

"At all events, there is one comfort," said he, "in this accident; it won't be the *cause* of her having a hare-lip."

"Ha! ha! ha! Well, when is it to be, Dapperwit?" laughed my uncle; "and which is it to be?"

“Neither, I’m afraid, Sir; for I can’t afford a man-cook, and I don’t like a plain one.”

“Ha! ha! ha! The man-cook, I certainly think, would be apt to rule the roast,” said my uncle.

“And,” said Lord Frederick, who now returned with a favourable *bulletin* of Lady Laura’s nose, laying his hand upon Dapperwit’s shoulder, “I’m afraid, between them both, they’d spoil this broth of a boy.”

At length the curtain rose, and Fiametta, really beautiful as a gem from some fairy’s cabinet, her exquisite head and face (above her pink satin dress, with its black lace *basquinas*) peeping out of a black lace mantilla, which she quickly flung aside, looked like a moss rose-bud visibly expanding. The first crisp chirpings of her castanets seemed to carry off the admiration of the whole house, while Philip Vavasour stood Byronising in the wing, apparently undecided which to admire most, Fiametta or himself.

At the very first notes of the fandango, we were summoned out of the box; and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues hurried us along the passage, across the back of the stage, to the wing; for the plan was, that as soon as ever the applause had ceased for Andalusia, Hungary was to have its turn. I was soon dressed; but when standing at the left wing, the opposite one from which Fiametta had entered, I was so dazzled, or rather so frightened by the lights, the orchestra, and the people, that I burst out crying, and said I never

could dance before so many. In vain Angelot clasped his hands, and “Est-il possible’d?” and Mademoiselle threatened me with my aunt’s displeasure. The bolero was just over.

“Look,” said Mademoiselle, pointing to the stage-box, “how pale and anxious Sir George looks; and you are going to be so unkind, so ungrateful, as to disappoint him, and indeed to disgrace him, after the way he loves you, and all he has done for you; and he is only to give you masters, and everything else, to show the world that he is wasting his money upon a little dunce, who will not, or cannot, dance one dance to oblige him; while night after night, Miss Fiametta, for whom he does comparatively nothing, has the goodness to dance for him and his guests as long as he pleases. Go—I am ashamed of you. I thought you had a good heart, but I see I was mistaken. Poor Sir George! it’s for *him* that I am sorry.”

Every syllable of this harangue was gradually taking effect; and at its conclusion, I raised my eyes to the stage-box, and truly, as Mademoiselle had said, my uncle *was* looking pale and nervously anxious towards the wing where we were standing, and where he probably had seen all that passed. This was quite enough. I threw my arms round Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, and with a concluding sob, assured her that I would dance the cracovienne even better than I had done in the morning.

“Enfin, je respire!” said Angelot, who had been keeping up an adagio accompaniment of threats to assassinate his Cremona, and suicide himself, as I was likely to disgrace them both.

What, perhaps, confirmed me in my resolution was, that, during the concluding plaudits for the bolero, Fiametta, who had that moment run off the stage, passed by with Philip Vavasour, who was in waiting to cover her with a shawl, just as the orchestra began playing the cracovienne; and Mademoiselle snatched the cloak that concealed my dress from my shoulders.

“*You going to dance, Mirry!*” laughed Fiametta, eyeing me from head to foot.

“What presumption,” sneered Philip, flinging me over his shoulder, as he passed on, the most Laralike piece of optical blighting he could command at so short a notice.

“Oh, let us make haste round to see the fun,” said Fiametta.

I let the orchestra repeat the air, but I was not hesitating, as Angelot and Mademoiselle feared—I was but waiting till Fiametta and her companion were seated in the stage-box; and then, at the repetition of the first bar of the cracovienne, I bounded on the stage, to use Angelot’s words, “as if my feet had been of down, with diamond wings to them.” The universal plaudits which ran round the house, were echoed with heartfelt cordiality behind the

scenes. I not only made my salute to the audience in general, but favoured Fiametta and her companion with one in particular.

My Aunt Marley might well have been surprised (though she need not have expressed that surprise so long and so widely) at the *aplomb* and the expression with which I danced, for no one could be half so much surprised at it as I was myself; but then, to be sure, I was urged on by two very potent spurs—my dear, kind uncle's look of triumph and delight, and the mighty Philip's very undignified look of wonder and admiration.

Three *encores* for the *cracovienne* were rather exhausting, but in the first triumph, I mean public triumph of one's life, there is no room for fatigue, *that* is for the heavy baggage of disappointment, and after all, I was finally recalled. Those were not the days of *bouquets*, but Angelot had prepared a diadem of green and gold laurel, which, removing my Hungarian cap, he, dressed as a rather masculine figure of Victory, placed upon my head; and I was not sorry at length to escape from my honours, for I was so tired that I could not get as far as the green-room, *alias* dressing-room, *alias* lumber-room, but flung myself upon the first chair behind the scenes, whither the Barons Doodlezac and Von Schwillingwine also came, nearly suffocating me with compliments and tobacco; and in the way of puffs, I even then, but most decidedly now, prefer the former. Doodlezac pryed inquisitorially into my cap

and feather, while Schwillingwine investigated minutely into my boots to try and discover where the art was niched, and from whence the success had come; for as their compatriot Jean Paul Richter truly says: "The Germans, like metaphysicians, wish to know everything from the bottom, accurately, in large octavo, with no excess of conciseness, and with a few citations. They rig out an epigram with a preface, and a love-madrigal with a table of contents. They determine the course of a zephyr by a sea-compass, and the heart of a girl by conic sections. Like merchants, they mark everything with capitals, and prove everything like jurists. The membranes of their brains are living memorandum books, their legs are secret metewands and pedometers. They cut asunder the veil of the Nine Muses, and measure the hearts of these girls with compasses, and their heads with a guage." While Doodlezac and Schwillingwine were doing the same by me, and likewise sounding Angelot with a plummet, which at all events had plenty of lead in it, as to—

"Gomment il était bossible que je navait abbrit cetta tanse assez pien pour tanser devant la gompagnie debbuis le matin?" Schwillingwine adding:

"Gar moi, j'étais neuf mois dans un maître de tanse à Vienne, et je ne hai jamais peut l'abbrendre."

"C'est clair," said Angelot, laughing, "être neuf mois incarcéré dans un maître de danse! en effet on aura de la peine à savoir sur quel pied danser."

Here Master Philip Vavasour made his appearance, leisurely looking to the right, and to the left, as if he had expected to find every body gone, and not doing so, seemed unlike Sam, as though

“Slumber soothed not, pleasure could not please!”

However, notwithstanding the scandalous idleness and incapacity of these two blessings of all-work, he contrived to convey himself without their assistance to the side of the chair upon which I was sitting; and Doodlezac and Schwillingwine being at the time deeply engaged in impressing upon Angelot that great undisputed truism, of the muscles being more pliant in youth than in age, he bent down, and said:

“Really, Miriam, you looked exceedingly pretty, and danced that Hungarian dance most beautifully!” and in order to take his affidavit of it, as it were, there being no book at hand, he kissed me.

Few young ladies of my age could have looked or felt more insulted; he had never done so before, as from the difference between our ages he might have done, so I now felt all the impertinence of the patronage contained in this proceeding; therefore, without a moment’s hesitation or reflection, I gave him a slap in the face for his pains, merely echoing in the facsimile of his own supercilious sneer of while ago—“What presumption!” And it coming “twangingly off,” I mean the slap, not the kiss, Doodlezac and Schwillingwine turned suddenly round, and upon seeing the rue-

ful face of this "hero of a thousand attitudes," burst into a stentorian fit of laughter, while Master Philip Vavasour slunk away, muttering something about his being "the first of his family that had ever been so insulted."

"Ha! ha! ha! no, your family are generally first to insult and to injure," burst from a husky voice, which seemed to come from the rafters amid the machinery.

"Ha!" cried Philip, turning round and stopping suddenly, livid with rage, as he looked up, set his teeth, and clenched his threatening hand. "Who dares to insult *my family*? I will tear his tongue from his mouth before he shall do it again."

There are few things perhaps more ludicrous, and at the same time more painful, than to see a pigmy struggling and tottering under the colossal armour of pride, which only crushes him without aiming at or warding off a single blow from his assailant. No answer being returned to his demand, he still stood looking up, his fine head thrown back, his dark eyes almost burnt out as it were with rage, and every muscle and fibre swollen and quivering from passion. When Mademoiselle de Guilleragues walked up to him, and laying one hand gently on his arm, while she pointed to the rafters with the other, said:

"My good young gentleman, there is no use in your standing there like Ajax defying the thunder,

for it is up there that the thunder and lightning of the theatre are kept!"

Stung still more by the quiet ridicule of this speech, he broke from her, grasping his hair on both sides as if he could have dashed down his own head as a gage to his invisible foe. Alarmed at his violence, which certainly dated from the blow I had given him, I followed and tried to overtake him, to ask his forgiveness, but he was gone.

"What is the matter with Philip?" asked I.

"Pride, or if you like it better, the Lucifer-fever."

"I'm so glad—not glad that he has got a fever, but glad it was not I who made him angry."

"No, it was the laugh of the two barons, the having witnesses, in fact, to an affront, though only offered by a child; and above all, the little bit of truth that dropped down to him as it were out of the clouds. On a bien raison de dire," concluded Mademoiselle, "que ce n'est que la vérité qui blesse."

Here Lord Frederick came to say, that all the world, as he phrased it, requested the honour of my company to supper.

But a public favourite may be allowed to give herself airs, so I sent back word that I was too tired; but begged of Lord Frederick to ask my uncle just to come to the dining-room door, as I wanted to kiss him before I went to bed; he did so, and the real triumph of the evening to me, was when he caught

me up in his arms, and called me his own darling little Red Boots, (a pet name that I retained through many a year); and the real pleasure of the evening was, when he invited Grace, Pomba, and me, to breakfast with him and Fido the next morning.

CHAPTER III.

“THERE is no greater wisdom,” observes Lord Bacon, “than well to time the beginnings and onsets of things;” and it was for this reason that I consider Mademoiselle de Guilleragues never evinced more wisdom than upon the following morning, when presents began to pour in to me from all quarters, as if I had really been an opera-dancer. From the Duke of Brunswick I received a beautiful little enamel watch, representing on each side the head of a cherub, one dark, the other fair, with sapphire and pearl wings; the “*Veillées du Château*,” “*Adèle et Théodore*,” beautifully bound, and some half-dozen yards of the smallest possible Venetian chain, from the Duc de Bouillon; a splendid doll’s-house from Lord Frederick; and an equally magnificent wax-doll from Captain Dapperwit; a turquoise heart and chain from Mr.

Waltham; an emerald bracelet from the Margravine (as I then thought), but which afterwards turned out to be a very fine, though by no means rare, specimen of coloured-glass; and though last, not least, as in heaviness it certainly out-weighed them all, a copy in boards of Lady Laura's last valuable novel, "The Philanthropic Poisoner;" and what no doubt enhanced the value of the gift was, that having been sent open, that is, unenveloped in paper, it contained several autographs of Sam's classic fingers; I call them classic, as they had evidently graduated in grease.

Well, as I said before, Mademoiselle never evinced more wisdom than on this occasion; for after she had cordially sympathized with my delight, admired all my presents, and made me not only divide them equally with Grace, but offer her her choice of them; and Grace, always amiable and forbearing, took good care not to select the little angels keeping watch, with which she saw I was especially delighted.

"Now, why do you suppose you were sent all those pretty things, Miriam?" asked Mademoiselle.

"Oh," said I, with a *petit air de suffisance*, "because I danced so well."

"Ah! my dear child," said Mademoiselle, shaking her head, "ignorance is the foundation of all conceit, as your last speech has fully evinced; for if you reflected a moment, you would recollect that most of the persons who saw you dance last night, have seen all the finest dancers in Europe; therefore, it is not

to be supposed that they could see anything so very wonderful in the dancing of a little girl of your age, as to think it worthy of sending you such pretty things. It is not on account of your dancing that they have sent them."

"Then why is it?" asked I, with a strange fall-from-the-clouds sort of feeling, at finding that I was nothing more than an ordinary individual after all, though my ears had rung with *bravas* on the preceding night, and a fame *d'occasion* had crowned me with laurel; but it is precisely in proportion to their tinsel that such sham diadems of popular favour quickly tarnish and crumble into dust, leaving us no trace of their ephemeral existence, but the humiliating conviction of our own, and their insignificance.

"I'll tell you why; it is because you were a good girl, a doubly good girl: for you first took great pains to learn the cracovienne, in order to amuse your uncle and his guests; and next, though naturally timid and frightened at the idea of dancing before so many persons, you made a brave struggle to conquer your own fears and feelings in order not to disoblige and disappoint your dear good uncle; and that's the reason why people love you, and think you deserving of all these pretty things."

Somehow or other, without feeling at all in the same state of effervescence that I did when my dancing was applauded, I felt an intense glow of satisfaction at what Mademoiselle had just said, and

a vague, but strong notion, that even I had the power of being of some use in the world instead of only receiving as I had hitherto done; but I could, at the same time, think of no better way of accomplishing this, than by throwing my arms round Mademoiselle, and assuring her that I was quite ready to dance every night, even before more people, if the theatre would hold more.

“Non, ma petite,” said she, “you shall never dance again on any theatre with my consent, for I don’t like public exhibitions for young ladies; and I only wished or allowed you to dance last night, to prove that you were neither less willing nor less capable of obliging than your cousin; for to be willing to serve or oblige, without knowing how, is the great canker of most persons’ good intentions. If a doctor gave you poison, instead of medicine, and then said he was very sorry, he had meant to cure you, but did not know Peruvian bark from prussic acid, and so administered the latter for the former, neither his regrets nor his ignorance would restore your life, or compensate to your friends for your loss; and the more I see of the world, the more I am convinced that ignorance, which always begets apathy, is the moral poison of society. How constantly do we hear—‘Oh, that’s that horrid Mr. Tomkins, who forged upon Mr. Simpkins.’ ‘No, on the contrary,’ replies the auditor, ‘it was Simpkins who forged upon Tomkins.’ ‘Ah, well,’ says the first speaker, ‘I know it was one or the other of them,’—

or, 'Or isn't there something against Mrs. So-and-So's character? didn't she go off with some man?' 'No, on the contrary, it was her husband who turned her out of the house to make way for his mistress; in short, who has done everything that's infamous.' 'Oh, well, I knew that there was something disreputable about them; and as they were separated, I of course thought it was her fault.' How often too, in a mixed society, do we hear a sweeping condemnation of a person's conduct, till some one, personally and intimately acquainted with the condemned, chooses to say: 'Surely you cannot be aware that such-and-such are the facts?' then comes the answer of: 'No, I was not: *that* quite alters the case;' in short, my dear children, as society is now constituted, calumnies are cut out, as soldiers' clothes are by the army tailors, that is wholesale, and with no regard whatever as to their fitness for the luckless individuals upon whom they are thrust. But what I mean by knowing how to be useful is, in fact, having *des connoissances contre les naufrages*, for many who are born in a palace may have to live in a desert, or die in a hovel, in which case mere accomplishments are of no use. Look at our *noblesse*, how magnanimously and bravely have they come down from the lap of luxury, to cheerfully and indefatigably breaking stones, for their daily bread, on the rugged highways, and still more rugged and desolate by-ways of life; oh, they have great hearts!" exclaimed Mademoiselle, her eyes filling with tears; "so great

that even that meanest of all things—poverty—becomes dignified and honourable in them, just as in the vast saloons of the Italian palaces, even the rags of a beggar look picturesque and poetical, from the grandeur and loftiness by which they are surrounded.

“ After to-morrow, I intend to take you both, three times a-week, to get lessons from Mistress Stillingfleet in all that concerns household matters, even to cooking and preserving, and making broths and beverages properly for a sick room. If you happen to marry dukes, or *millionnaires*—which, however, are not overplentiful in the lottery of marriage—such knowledge will enable you to make your very splendour more sterling, by knowing how things ought to be, and not trusting entirely to money, or to servants; for though the former is omnipotent, yet the latter often contrive to play the d—l, and introduce discord and disappointment, as Lucifer did before them; and if, on the contrary, you are married to a man of only moderate fortune, such knowledge will double it—at least, in comfort and appearance; and if to a downrightly poor man, then the want of such knowledge becomes a positive vice, for, by disorder and bad management, you give to the wasp poverty the sting of the hornet. Economy, to deserve the name, should be like the springs of a watch, invisibly regulating the fair exterior; the moment it is made apparent in petty savings and deficiencies, without neatness and order, it becomes meanness, and not economy; for economy is the art of

making much out of little ; and stinginess, the art of making even much appear little ; and little, still less.

“ Besides, rich or poor, I’m very certain, if your husband loved you, he would like everything better, from the idea that you were the main-spring of it ; and if he were ill, I think he would get well all the sooner, from knowing that all he took was prepared by you. Any, even the most ordinary young lady, would feel very properly ashamed, if, when grown up, she had not the least idea of the order of succession of the kings of her own country, or how to find out a place on the map ; and yet, in my opinion, she ought to feel equally ashamed at not knowing the succession of bills of fare—that is, knowing when things are, and are not, in season, in order to be able to order dinner for every day in the year ; and also, it is a lamentable piece of ignorance not to know whether things that come into the house are good or bad, or how they ought to be dressed or preserved. There are some, alas ! many, houses so disgustingly ill appointed (and not from poverty either, though that would be no excuse), that they remind one of the old story of Beau Filigree, who married Miss Dulcibella Dieaway ; and a friend of his asking a third party, who had dined with this couple the day before, what sort of *ménage* Filigree’s was, the other replied :

“ ‘ Oh ! it is a sort of house where everthing is sour but the vinegar ; and the wife has become like a cow in everything but her breath ! ’ meaning thereby, that

there was the bad of everything, and the good of nothing; just as some persons have the unlucky talent of imbibing all their country's defects, without one of the national virtues; for which reason you sometimes meet French people frivolous without being either graceful or agreeable; English people cold and stupid, without being either clean or sincere; Scotch persons cringing without being humble, and stingy without being thrifty; while the crowning horror of all, is the Hibernian, who with all the dirt, disorder, laziness, and braggadocio of his or her country, has not one particle of its wit, warm-heartedness, or generosity.

“I once knew an immensely rich Russian princess, whose money used actually to be shovelled out, without any regard to numerical barriers; and yet, though she kept four cooks, everything was so bad and so dirty, that there was no touching anything. I was at the same time acquainted with an English lady of very straitened means, but she was a real lady, as everything about her proclaimed, for there was a brilliancy of cleanliness and order surrounding her that amounted to luxury, and, by the vulgar and the superficial, were taken for such. Everything was good to a point of perfection—bread, butter, tea, cream,—and coffee! Such coffee! worthy of Mahomet, or Voltaire himself. Neither was she ever so vulgar, or so ungrateful, as to be ashamed of her poverty, and it would have been ingratitude, as it was the only thing that had not deserted her; therefore she was never annoyed at being found

at dinner with merely one *plat*; but then, to be sure, that one, thanks to her own knowledge of cookery, and the pains she had taken to instruct one of her only two servants that officiated as cook, was well-dressed and as well-served (for that is half the battle) as if it had been the production of a *cordon bleu*, and if only a *côtelette*, or a *salmi*, it was perfect. Then, too, nowhere could glass and plate be seen more brilliant, or linen more dazzlingly white than hers; and most truly has it been said, that cleanliness is the elegance of poverty—it might be added its only elegance, and therefore should never be neglected.

“But don’t suppose, my dear children, that because as women I think it essential that you should be good, that is, ladylike housekeepers, and also know how to do plain work thoroughly and neatly; for not to do so, I look upon as great an omission in a woman’s education as it would be in a man’s not to know how to handle a sword, or load a gun, for those are their weapons; and as needles and scissors are our only ones, surely we ought to know how to use them; but as I was going to say, it is not upon that account that women should be ignorant of all else: on the contrary, they cannot have too much general and solid information, because general information will make them agreeable and useful companions to all classes and all ages; and solid information is a chart and compass that will prevent their splitting upon that most paltry of all rocks, pedantry; and, at the same

time will keep them clear of the quicksands of folly, vice, and vanity. And if you learn how to be of use to yourself and others, depend upon it, you will gain more love than by dancing boleros or cracoviennes."

"But why," said I, "don't they always send Fiametta presents when she dances?" for, like the rest of the world, I was more full of my own affairs than all Mademoiselle had been saying; for good seed, even more than bad, requires time to fructify, though when sown early it is sure to yield a harvest at last.

"Oh, because," said Mademoiselle, in answer to my question, "she dances every night."

"But why does she dance every night, if it is wrong, as you say, for girls to dance in public?"

There is nothing so difficult to answer as children's home thrusts, either in theology, or moral philosophy; and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, no doubt, not being able to reply to this last query of mine without uprooting some of the good seed she had been trying to sow, did not answer it, but instead, merely looked at her watch, and exclaimed:

"Ciel! we were to have breakfasted with Sir George at nine, and ma foi, it is now ten minutes past; vite, descendons!"

CHAPTER IV.

GRACE having taken charge of the large wax-doll in her silver-paper *négligée*, and Mademoiselle of the books, while I was hung in jewellery, like the image of a newly-decorated Madonna, Nelly was summoned to carry down the house; for my Uncle Paulett being an honorary member of the nursery and school-room clubs, we should have thought it high treason had any important donation been made to either without his being apprized of it; and, indeed, so well did he act his part of wonder, admiration, and delight, at every new accession to the realms, not of Troy, but toy, that we were for a long time under the firm conviction that he was quite as fond of playthings as we were, and thought it a great shame that when any were sent to us, there were not some also sent to him, and that it was only a part and parcel of his usual

unselfish kindness which prevented his accepting them when we offered him ours.

As for Nelly, ever since my last night's triumphs, she was in such a state of inflation, that I am very certain had that enterprising genius, Mr. Barnum, only been there to induce her to dispose of herself upon advantageous terms, and had tied one of my red Hungarian boots to her, as a sort of parachute, she would have soared away higher into the clouds than any balloon that has ever yet been known, or kite either, even in America. And when she now saw me "all covered wid jules and relics," as she called them, she went off into such a paroxysm of hand-clasping and turning up her eyes, that I think she really thought I was a "shaint," more especially when I issued a miraculous mandate, ordering her to take up the house and carry it down stairs.

"Och, den shure enough, afther Dermot's having had the imperrance to find hish way here, and me own child taking de concate out of dat stuck-up Missh, of Sur Josephsh's, and her cast-yer-nets, as she callsh dem, (she casht dem in throubled wathers lasht night, I'm tinkin'), I don't doubt but dere ish notin'g impossibble," muttered Nelly; and then began awkwardly trying to take the house cross-ways, instead of length-ways, so that of course it was (being a very large one) too broad for her arms to compass.

"Och, murder!" said she, desisting from her labours, "itsh Missh Bell dat I ought to shend for,

she's de only one dat makesh nothing of raishing de houshe at a momentsh notishe."

My uncle was delighted, as usual, with my presents, and suggested sundry alterations in the arrangements of the drawing-room furniture; for there was no shade of kindness unknown to, or unpractised by him, and he well understood the happy art of awarding the sympathy of importance to the trifles that interest children; to be sure, he never talked or wrote fine sentiments, and therefore realities were the only safety-valves he had for his exuberance of Faith, Hope, and Charity. After breakfast, he and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, from discussing the Margravine's acting, and the Germans then at —, got to a comparative analysis of Germany, France, and England.

"Germany," said my uncle, "gives me always the idea, from the immense mass of vague, subtle, and yet withal misty, metaphysics that is floating about it, of the disembodied soul of some dead world, struggling in all directions to re-unite itself with the unigenous bonds of matter; and England, of a body without a soul, mechanically perfectionizing all its unspiritual wants; while France, with its exotic philosophy grafted upon its mercurial temperament, seems like a great myth in the world's phantom of the Graces doomed to the Mezentian punishment."

"I quite agree with you," said Mademoiselle; "for the fact is, Germany is the great emporium for the

raw material of thought, which is next highly and elaborately wrought in the brain-looms of France, and then retailed in England, where a little of the original dullness is restored to the tissue, which the English call solidity ; and thus having put their own stamp upon the article, they take out a patent as profound thinkers."

"Perfectly true," said my uncle ; " but so it must be, on the principle of division of labour. The universe is nothing more than the great manufactory of God's purposes ; the workshop of the Eternal, in fact, where souls, through the manifold processes of different destinies, are hewn and moulded for exportation to other hemispheres ; and of course, the same part of the machinery which sorts the rags, cannot hot-press and weave the fair sheet of paper. I only wish the system could be extended to individuals, as well as to nations ; for I never read Wordsworth, for example, without wishing that he could get some one else to express his ideas (as indeed Lord Byron has kindly done for him in many instances), and then he would really be a great poet ; but as it is, his finest thoughts are often marred by the rusty hinges of a badly-turned phrase. It would seem as if the sacred spark within us was ever yearning for the mystic Trinity in all things : mere thought in poetry does not satisfy without that harmony of expression which is to intellectual imagery what sunlight is to the material landscape—the halo that vivifies and gilds it into beauty. For Sweden-

borg is right when he asserts, that ‘There are three apartments in the soul of man—the outer thought which the senses act on the external world is open in all men; the second, from which the light of intellect shines through the senses is open in greater or lesser degrees in most men; into the inmost shrine comes light directly from the spiritual world, shines through the transparent intellect, irradiates the senses, and sheds ethereal glory on all external things; according to the degree in which the veil of this sanctuary is removed, and the direction in which its rays are turned by temperament and education, men become prophets, poets, or artists.’”

“*A-propos* of prophets,” said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues; “what do you think of the prophecy of my compatriot, the Duc de Rohan, who said a hundred and twenty years ago, that ‘England was a huge animal that will never die till it commits suicide.’”

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed my uncle, “then I think she may take her place among the immortals at once; for though the English ‘are not a moral people, and they know it,’ as Lord Byron says, yet I think England does really possess that sort of take-care-of-number-one morality in too pre-eminent a degree ever to be guilty of the crime of suicide, unless indeed she should get an indigestion of wealth, and prefer death to abstinence. There is a prophecy, too, about Ireland, as old as the time of Tacitus, when it appears that a huge sea-monster was in the habit of haunting

its coast (called by the naturalists the *Tchetus Megacodensis*), and revolutionizing the sea to that degree that all the finny tribe became fish out of water, and emigrated in shoals to the dry land to get out of his way.* The prophecy runs that Ireland will never be at peace; that is, never have justice done her till this monster is destroyed; and goes on to say, that his destruction will not be accomplished till the industry of all nations shall pour into the land of the Saxon,† as that of the ancient world did into Persepolis, or else on the first day of the year 1900. So you see, like all prophecies, it has two epochs of egress given to it."

"It is very provoking," said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, "that prophecies seem a sort of rare fragile egg-shell porcelain, which Mamma Nature always puts by, and keeps for the benefit of her favourite child when it grows up to years of posterity."

"Mister Vavasour's compliments, Sir," said Morden, as he laid the letter-bag on the table, "and he should be glad to speak to you for a few minutes, if you are at leisure."

"I am, till eleven," replied my uncle, looking at

* This is evidently our "fat friend," the sea-serpent, whom I am inclined to think is no other than Job's Leviathan—the crowning miracle of creation, unique and eternal of his species; in short, the submarine Wandering Jew, whom, it would appear, from the galvanic charges of the small fry he lately ejected, keeps his own private electric telegraph.

† We are very near May, 1851. *Nous verrons.*

his watch, "and it's only a quarter past ten, so he may come in."

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues rose to depart, and asked if we should go too, but my uncle said we might remain, which I was very glad of, as I was in all the agonies of experimental philosophy, trying to make a gridiron, which I had transplanted from the kitchen to the drawing-room, fit on the chimney-piece, where I was trying in vain to make it do duty as an ornament; but even drawing-room chimney-pieces, it would seem, have the aristocratic spirit of exclusiveness, and resist interlopers from an inferior sphere. So this one was with much narrowness demonstrating at its every corner, that there was no room for the gridiron, while I was suffering almost as much as St. Lawrence from the fever I had got into in trying to force it upon the mantel-piece *nolens volens*, though Grace, who was a Conservative, espoused the cause of the latter, and entreated me to desist. As we were sitting in the embrasure of the window, with the doll's house before us, we could upon standing up see over the roof, but upon sitting down were to others perfectly invisible, which I was glad of, as I was rather anxious to know whether Philip in asking to see my uncle was coming to complain of the slap in the face I had given him the night before, as he had appeared so very angry after it.

"Good morning, my boy," said my uncle to him as he entered, putting out his hand to him without how-

ever taking his eyes off of a newspaper he had just opened till he added, "have you breakfasted?" when he laid down the paper.

"Yes, thank you, Sir; that is no—at least, I mean I don't want any breakfast."

My uncle looked at him half gravely over his spectacles, and said:

"Ah, well, you are on the right side of the gulf of want; for the things we don't want are always easier of attainment than those that we do."

"I—I want to speak to you, Sir."

"You have only to speak, I'm listening; but first sit down, and then we shall be upon more equal terms."

"I wish, Sir, if it is not inconvenient to you, that you would allow me to have your yacht to return to England before Lady Paulett goes next month."

"Why, are you uncomfortable here? I hope Mrs. Marley and Miss Paulett—that is, I hope nothing has occurred to annoy you?"

"Mrs. Marley and Miss Paulett have both been exceedingly kind to me, but—"

Notwithstanding the but, my uncle seemed to inhale new courage into his heart and lungs, and with a climacteric pinch of snuff appeared now equal to anything.

"But," continued Philip, "I was last night so grossly insulted that I cannot remain here."

It was now my turn to feel uncomfortable; I grew

very red. I looked at my right hand, the author of the blow; I had no dagger in it, but *faute de mieux* the gridiron fell from my paralyzed grasp on my white frock, where it lay like a black elephant skeleton amid the snows of Caucasus, while Mademoiselle de Guille-
ragues, who was walking on the lawn, beckoned to Grace, who opened the window, and went to her.

“Insulted in my house! by whom pray?” said my uncle.

“Did I know by whom, I should have avenged the insult, Sir, and not have complained of it.”

“But if you don’t know the name of the offenders, you surely must know their appearance; describe them.”

“I cannot, Sir; I did not see them.”

“Why really,” said my uncle, smiling, “I begin to think you must have been insulted like the Scotchman in James the Second’s time, who, in going along the Strand, heard some one calling him a poor, beggarly, raw-boned Highlander, whereupon he hastily drew his dirk, but perceiving it was only a green parrot who had paid him this compliment, he banded up the scratch his pride had received by doubling his fist at the scurrilous bird, and saying, ‘Gin ye wor a mon, as ye are green gusc, I’d splat yer craw far ye wi’ my dirk.’”

“No, Sir, it was no parrot that insulted me; it was some dastardly wretch from the rafters of the theatre, who, under the shelter of his ambush, dared

to tell me that my family were generally the first to injure and to insult."

"Nay, my dear boy," said my uncle, with a sigh, "don't begin by wincing so keenly under, and resenting so fiercely, this small modicum of truth, or I fear neither your strength, nor your valour, will suffice to cope with the still more stubborn truths you will have to grapple with as you go through the world; for your father left such a host of unavenged victims, that you must expect to meet with a phalanx of reversionary insults at every turn you take; but believe me, the less you exhume your father's vices, by resenting any allusions you may hear to them, the better; and the only effectual way in which you can plunge them into a merciful oblivion, is by effacing them with the virtues of his son."

"Sir!" cried Philip, gasping, and tearing off his cravat, as he started to his feet, "you forget that you are impugning my dead father's honour?"

"Tush, boy! your living father had no honour to impugn," cried my uncle, now roused into congenial passion: "have you no touch of human feeling in you beyond your low, cold, hollow pride? Were it love for your father, the feeling would be laudable and noble; for love is a warm, gushing, natural fountain, ever overflowing and fertilizing all within its reach; therefore were it love, you would have some touch of nature towards the poor, withered, blighted, trampled heart of your ill-fated mother. But no, you

have only pride ! that ruthless tyrant, who carries the blazing torch of civil war into every mind that harbours it ; making fratricides of all the other passions, circling with a wall of adamant the wide territory of affection, and inclosing it in an artificial atmosphere of reserve, with an imaginary sky of grandeur above it, towards the over-charged imagery of which it is ever soaring, remorselessly unconscious of all external things, *of all other selves*, as long as it can soar higher and higher in this ideal region, with an eye that never sleeps, and a wing that never tires, and clasp in its arms of visionary self-importance the universe, no matter though earthquakes and thunderbolts be the wild and demon music elicited from the crumbling destinies it uproots and shivers in its headlong course. And for what ? often to leap prematurely into its own grave, or swell the fettered legions of insanity ; for truly pride goeth before a fall, and rapid is the descent from its giddy and tottering eminence to the dark unfathomable gulf beneath. Oh ! how the arch enemy of mankind must laugh when the column of pride catches the lightning's flash, as the clouds of fate are riven asunder, and for once out-blazes Heaven ! but only as its own funeral pyre, and to add more ashes to the lowly city of the dead ! Do not suppose that I am drawing an imaginary picture of the loathsome turpitude, the moral deformity, the reeking rankness, and the varnished villany, that national pride and luxury engender, and then let loose in legions of embodied

curse to jostle each other in the crowded thoroughfares of every city, and pine and perish in many a lonely hamlet; no, I speak of the dark, narrow, crooked bye-ways—the blind, vice-crammed alleys into which no ray from heaven ever penetrated—of one man's heart, and that man was your father! When I told you the other day, that he had left no brutality uninflicted, no outrage unheaped upon your mother, where till he ended his days in a mad-house from *delirium tremens*, brought on by a fit of intemperance, before he had recovered from a wound inflicted by the husband of a woman he had seduced—your only commentary, and it was at once christian-like and noble, was, ‘that men would be men, and that wives, under any provocation, should never complain!’

“No, verily, for it is worse than useless. The law has taken good care to provide no redress for them, nor is it likely ever to be the *custos morum*, as long as the men who sit in high places to frame and to administer it are themselves profligate and immoral characters;* and as the law of public opinion is far more potent in our social code than any *lex scripta*, to hold the broad brand of infamy always at gallic's heat,

* What would this honest old English gentleman have thought of my Lord Brougham's great zeal, in a recent cruel case of a wife's seeking redress at the hands of the law, (poor silly creature!) to impress upon his hearers the “necessity of preventing women from obtaining divorces for cruelty and adultery.” He would have said, no doubt, that the sentiment was worthy of the man.

ready to stamp certain species of delinquents for posterity, it is necessary to close the doors even of this tribunal of appeal to their victims, by a disgusting twaddle of spurious, because one-sided morality; which, by enacting an impost of dumbness on the oppressed, shrouds the oppressor in a dastardly, but impregnable panoply. But as honour is your watchword, what think you of the nice, manly, and high-strung honour of a man, who, after having violated every duty, and left no sin unsinned towards his wife, in order to justify his own infamy, goes about defaming her (for there are no prejudices in society against such conduct, provided always that the husband's the aggressor,) and when asked if such is the case, why he does not resort to the two modes of redress which are always open to men,—pistols and Doctors'-Commons—nobly and chivalrically replies, 'that that's his affair,' and prefers at once pocketing and proclaiming his fabricated dishonour. Ay! hide your face in your hands, groan in the very innermost coils of your soul, gird your spirit in the sackcloth of shame, roll your proud heart in the burning ashes of abasement, for that man was your father! Ha! I've touched the rock at last: you weep; then all is not lost. Now that the living waters have gushed out, oh! let them quench the parched fever of your pride; even though your tears be bitter as the waters of Mara, they are salutary. Pride needs such a tonic."

"Pride! what have I to be proud of, if what you

have told me is true?" said Vavasour, with a fresh paroxysm of agony, as, with his hands still covering his face, he turned to the wall, and rocked his head against it.

"Not much, certainly, as regards your father; but you are not responsible for his conduct, but for your own you are, and by that must every one fall or stand, at least at the highest and irrevocable tribunal; for though men judge by results, and therefore with them plausibility and success solders every breach and gilds every blemish, yet God judges by the intent only, and our own motives are the weights by which we shall be weighed in His scale. Philip," continued my uncle, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, as he drove the tears back from his own eyes, which, however, trembled in his voice, "forgive me, if I have spoken harshly of your father; I would even let his grievous faults be buried with him; for his dread personal account has long been carried over to Eternity, in whose summing up there are no errors; but that he has left a debt to his country that I would fain see so honourably and honestly discharged, as to make society forget the wrong he did it, in the good he bequeathed to it, as some poor relations submit cheerfully to a rich miser's frauds and caprices, in order to become his wealthy heir. It only rests with you, my boy, to be to the world as the miser's gold to the victimized relative; for, as even by our fairest virtues, stalks the gaunt shadow of its

changeling vice, so near, that sometimes even in our most poisonous vices grows their antidote. Do not then uproot your pride, and cast it out, but only prune it, and bend its stubborn and yet flimsy branches, till they become merely parasites round the giant oak of Principle; and then, depend upon it, you will find it a pleasant shade in sunshine, and a safe shelter in adversity."

"I will try to be all you say," said Philip, mournfully; "and yet, it seems as if I should have to be unmade. Why, why have I been brought up to think, that, like the King, my father and my father's family could do no wrong, when they have done so much; and taught to resent it as a personal insult, if ever I heard him or them mentioned, save with the most fulsome praise?"

"Why!" echoed my uncle; "simply because

" 'Vice is a beldam of such hideous mien,
That to be shunned, she's only to be seen!'"

"If," hesitated Philip, "my father behaved so ill to my mother, did he ever repent of his conduct towards her, or try to atone for it?"

"Alas! my dear boy, you little know—and may God keep you ever from the self-knowledge of the hardening and corroding power of systematic wrong!—as there are some deserts so sterile, that not even a bramble can grow in them; so are there some hearts so barren, that not even the thorn of remorse can spring

up in them. Your father seemed to have made this passage from Fenelon the rule of his conduct, and it would do admirably for his epitaph: ‘Here is a man who only strove to make himself happy; and he fancied he could succeed by dint of wealth and absolute authority: he obtained all he coveted, and nevertheless he was wretched!’* The bad man who braves the world, is at least an honest reprobate, and honestly pays the forfeit of every wrong he commits; but the slimy hypocrite, who in violating every law, human and divine, insists upon being treated as an honourable and an unimpeachable character, is a moral swindler, and must of necessity be both a liar and a coward; indeed, the former is always the latter, though the latter is not of necessity the former.”

“But surely my father was not a coward, since he died of having fought a duel,” said Philip, with another flush of his false pride.

“In the first place,” said my uncle, “fighting duels is anything but a proof of courage; on the contrary, it is the test of cowardice, for it is the dread of the world’s opinion preponderating over the fear of God, that is the cause of duelling; and that moral horizon which men falsely call honour, like the horizon of the material world, is only an imaginary line which sepa-

* “Voici un homme qui n’a cherché qu’à se rendre heureux : il a cru y parvenir par les richesses et par une autorité absolue ; il possède tout ce qu’il peut désirer, et cependant il est misérable.”

rates earth from heaven. But, if duelling be a proof of courage, your father had not even this to offer as a set-off to those vices which entail duels; for it was well known in his day, that he had slunk out of several, and as his doing so could not be attributed to principle, it was justly enough imputed to cowardice; and the duel of which he eventually died was thrust upon him, for the man whom he had injured pursued him, sword in hand, and having got him at bay in a sort of *cul de sac*, at the back of the bazaar at Cairo, bid him draw, and defend himself; ‘and needs must when the d—l drives.’”

Philip champed his under-lip till it actually bled, and then said:

“Well but, Sir, would you not, under some circumstance, feel it necessary to fight a duel?”

“Under none, Sir. Why should I? I have been in thirteen general actions, have led two forlorn hopes, and have received two musket and three sabre-wounds; and, what was considered at the time rather more daring, once fought single-handed against a French convoy of three, in the Desert, seized their despatches, and galloped safely off with them to our own head-quarters, which obtained me the honour of a hearty curse from Napoleon, and a cordial recommendation for promotion from Sir Ralph Abercrombie. Duelling is an egotistical vice not in my way: whoever doubts my personal courage, is welcome to the benefit of the doubt.”

“But who,” said Vavasour, returning to his own original grievance, as people generally do, “who could have so insulted me last night?”

“I am inclined to think it was a very slight insult, bursting from a colossal injury, like the fragile but mantling flowers of the centenary aloe, which takes deep root, through long years, before the hoarded secrets of its heart blush to its rugged surface.”

“So then, you know who it was, Sir?” said Philip, his eyes suddenly kindling, and his delicately-chiselled features dilating with rage.

“I think I do.”

“His name, Sir—his name? for another hour shall not pass before I drive his words down his craven throat.”

“Nay, my dear boy, you must even sheathe your anger in the scabbard of justice; (ah! were more angers so sheathed, there would be much less ill blood in the world than there is), for the debit of the account lies the other way. There is living at present at—— a *ci-devant* Turkish merchant, of the name of Belzoni, whom you may have often heard me and the children mention: it was his wife, a very beautiful Greek woman, who was your father’s last victim; but the wrong did not end there. All things in this world move—nothing stands still; they must either progress or retrograde; but evil alone has the power of doing both; and the evil your father had done neither ended with his life, nor with his victim, but recoiled upon her

child, who, deprived of a mother's care, early encountered misfortune, as all children bereft of this first great natural blessing do. She was let to fall, when about two years old, which has deformed and injured the health of what would otherwise have been one of the most beautiful little creatures that ever was seen; and after this first turning aside, the wrong still strode on with giant steps, and overtook Belzoni in the shape of pecuniary ruin; for, from being one of the richest, if not the richest, merchant in the East, heart-broken and dispirited, he neglected his affairs; so that poverty soon put in her remorseless execution, and swallowed up all he possessed. Now, which way, think you, the insult and the injury lie?"

Philip groaned aloud, as he leant his elbows on the table, and buried his face in his hands, while the tears trickled through his fingers.

"Poor fellow! I'm glad to see you cry," said my uncle kindly, as he laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, and dashed the tears from his own eyes; "such tears are the tax conscience pays to Heaven; let some of them be for your mother, Philip, especially if you don't care for her, for then is she the more entitled to them; tears, at least, are women's hereditary and inalienable property."

And my uncle walked slowly into the study, shutting the door after him, and leaving me alone with Philip, who, however, was too profoundly preoccupied with his own painful and conflicting thoughts to

perceive that I was, or ever had been, in the room; but as I felt intuitively that he would be annoyed if he thought that I had heard all that had passed, I got quietly up, and walked behind his chair to the door, the Turkey carpet preventing my footsteps from being heard; I then turned the handle sufficiently loudly to rouse him, he turned round, and hastily dried his tears.

“Philip,” said I, getting up and kneeling upon a chair beside him, while I put my arm round his neck, for I was really sorry to see him so unhappy, “will you forgive me for being so rude to you last night? It was wrong, and I am very sorry for it.”

“My dear child,” he replied, kissing me, “I was not angry with you indeed: I had forgotten all about it.”

“Ah, but it was very naughty of me for all that; but Mademoiselle de Guilleragues says, when children have no mother, they are always badly brought up.”

Philip sighed, and I, quite forgetting my wish to spare his feelings, by not letting him think I had been in the room during his conversation with my uncle, added:

“I do so wish I had a mother; will you give me yours, Philip, and let me love her, if you don’t care for her?”

“Who says I don’t care for her?” said he, striking the table with his clenched hand, till all the breakfast things rang again, while the same volcanic look blazed

in his eyes, that had so frightened me on the preceding night, and I stammered out:

“Oh, I don’t know, only I have heard you don’t.”

“Then take care not to repeat what you have heard,” said he, now walking hastily up and down, with his arms tightly folded; “for it is not true.”

“Isn’t it? I’m so glad! then may I help you to love her?” said I, following him, and laying my hand upon his arm, as I looked up in his face.

He caught me up in his arms, kissed me convulsively, and then put me down, saying, as he rushed out of the room:

“Mirry, I’ll try and not want any one to help me.”

CHAPTER V.

DURING the next two years of our lives we began to use our own exertions in climbing the steep and rugged hill of life. As long as we are borne up it on the shoulders of others, we are apt not only to consider their murmurings as exaggerated, from being the fruits of discontent, but the little packets of experience they offer us from their own viaticums we fling away as not applicable to our individual wants; nor, indeed, beyond a certain point are they. For as that poor little marine insect called a polypus, scarcely bigger than a midge, is for ever throwing up particles of coral, which in the short space of twenty years become islands, and so alter the geography of certain latitudes as to render old charts useless, and new ones necessary, so in like manner that indefatigable, social polypus, circumstances, is for ever throwing up obstacles in the sea of

life, which render the fitness of things for one individual unfit for the steerage of another ; for even in minor transactions, if we only go to see a person with the intention of conferring or soliciting a service, and arrange our line of conduct beforehand, we find that when we come to act, circumstances of the most trifling kind change our whole preconcerted mode of proceeding ; consequently the only really useful, because immutable, accessories to our worldly navigation, are the compasses of judgment that can compute the broad outline of human nature, and the magnet of principle that never wavers from the polar star of right ; all the rest of what is called experience, are mere social charts, good in particular times and latitudes, but which, certainly, from the propelling and ever-changing power of circumstances, require continually remodelling according to those circumstances.

No one ever more conscientiously endeavoured to have proper theories, and then to utilize them into practice than Mademoiselle de Guilleragues ; but still both her judgment and her temper were often sorely tried by the injustice and caprice of my aunts ; and but for her fondness for us, and her positive veneration for my uncle, I don't think anything would have induced her to stay ; the more especially that during these two years, we had had no less than six English governesses, one after the other, who were all summarily dismissed ; and indeed my aunts were right in the matter, though decidedly wrong in the *manner*, for these governesses

had been engaged for the sole and express purpose of teaching us English, and securing us against the Hibernian flowers of Nelly's colloquial eloquence; but when it was found that these ladies indulged in, and consequently transferred to us, such elegancies of diction and pronunciation as the following, my Aunts lost their tempers, and they their situations.

"*Ride*," for drive; "I'm not *going to*;" "*such like*;" "*just like I did*;" "*come and help me put by the books*;" (the preposition absent without leave;) "*scent!*" that most vulgar of all vulgarisms, for perfume, or else the latter pronounced per-*fume*, which made my Aunts fume, and no wonder. Jersey, and St. Jameses, might have been forgiven them, as little people could not be expected to know that great people always said Jarsey and St. Jeemeses; but Villiers being an historical name, there really was something almost treasonable and deserving of thumbscrews or the Tower in vulgarizing it into Villyers! Rs and Hs, were also for most of them unelucidated enigmas; the former they threw out of the window, every time they told us to come away from the *winder*; while H they conceived had nothing to do with either heaven or happiness, and so, like charity, "*oped*" all things without it. They also talked of things having "*cost a deal of money*," or their having had a *deal* of trouble; and in vain we did our best to give them a great deal of the latter, still they never said so:—they only said, "*they never saw the like*."

In short, they would have shone as modern novel writers, in whom such elegancies of style and language abound. Then it was, always *fetch* your books, or your work; never bring them, or get it; with that crowning vulgarity of English pronunciation, the accentuating the second or the last syllable of a word; as for instance, mer-*can*-tile, con-*ver*-sant, in-*dec*-orous, Sir Francis Bur-*dett*—(for there is nothing so plebeian as laying a stress upon a debt of any kind, and I only wish all one's creditors could be persuaded of this). The last of the anti-syntaxian incapables, that were dismissed, was a Miss Squiggins, a young lady of very limited acquirements, and extensive requirements, for as she herself would have expressed it, she “talked a deal about the *no*-bility, and the *genteel families* in whose *mansions* and *residences* she *ad bin in the abit* of always aving two days in each month, to go out, and *alf olidays* on Saturdays, *and such like*.”

Here is the manner in which the Squiggins' administration came to totter to its fall; another instance in the great secret, or back-door history of the world, which, by-the-bye, is its only real one, for all the others are carved, gilt, and got up to order; another proof, I say, of—

“What dire offence from smallest causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things!”

It so happened, that upon a gusty Sunday in March, which chanced to be the anniversary of the battle of Alexandria, Mrs. O'Donnell, out of one of those belli-

cose compliments, so rife at the time, had, in order to pay her court to my Uncle, crammed her six-and-thirty yards of sons and daughters, (as Captain Dapperwit designated the twelve O'Donnell girls and their three brothers,) into Turkish trousers and turbans, the latter (Heaven and Mrs. O'Donnell only know why) embellished upon the left side with three white turkeys' feathers, unless, indeed, it was an epigrammatic way of alluding to the Turks having shown the white feather on that occasion; which the turkeys, as their nearest representatives in Europe, were called upon to demonstrate. I should further state, that the whole of this costume, instead of being composed of any gorgeous oriental materials, was fabricated with the plainest and commonest white cambric muslin, unrelieved by any colour, save the scarlet morocco boots in which they terminated, with a subdued shade of the same tint that "the stormy winds did blow" into the noses of their unfortunate wearers, so that they looked fearfully and wonderfully like those trays of white wax lambs, with red tips to their noses, that used to be hawked about the streets of London, on men's heads, in the days of my youth, accompanied by the cry of

"One a penny, two a penny, fine white lambs!"

And I appeal to a generous and ever-impartial public, to know whether it was possible to see fifteen miscellaneous-sized members of the rising generation,

dowered with immortal souls, issuing in solemn pairs, from out an English Church, upon a British Sabbath, in such a plight, and not burst out laughing? No, it was not, and even my Aunts and the ever-prim, precise, and proper Squiggins, were not unreasonable enough to expect that we should be able to so refrain, therefore we might have had our laugh with impunity, but for my unlucky tongue: "*ah! cattiva lingua*," as the poor Abbate Assai used to say. So, as soon as I could speak for laughing, I must needs cry out, not even confining the unflattering simile to one, but spreading the insult out thick over the whole fifteen:—"Why, you look exactly like the Forty Thieves!"—whereupon, Lily O'Donnell, whom it would appear, had all along most keenly felt the ridicule of being made to do duty as one of the fifteen amateur "turbaned Turks that scorned the world," and who had even resisted the exhibition, like major-domo in 'Blue-beard,' by taking refuge in the dust-hole during the mysteries of the toilet, now burst into such a bull-calf roar at my "odious comparison," that it completely drowned the band of the nine hundred and nine-ninth, which were at that moment defiling on their homeward march.

However, as I had compared the O'Donnells to the "Forty Thieves," it seems I was in duty bound to complete the simile by supplying the *jars*, which I did without loss of time, for my Aunts, who had no idea of any one's presuming to risk my uncle's popularity by

offensive proceedings to the worthy —itts, but themselves, now each of them bestowed upon me a most energetic box on the ear, so that I was fairly *both-eared*; and they also insisted upon my making the most humble apology to all the O'Donnells, collectively and individually—which I was quite ready to do (without this *con spirito* accompaniment)—and they to accept it, as they were, one and all, the best-tempered, and the best brought up little creatures possible. But, even when the amnesty was signed and sealed by no less than thirty kisses—for I had to undergo fifteen for the fifteen I had inflicted—still my Aunts were not appeased; and as my Aunt Marley was getting into the carriage (in which she insisted upon conveying Mrs. O'Donnell home), she turned sharply to the innocent Squiggins, and said:

“ I really don't see the use of governesses, if they allow children to be so insufferably ill-bred and impertinent; and I must beg, Miss Squiggins, that you will punish that abominable little wretch as soon as she gets home.”

“ *I intend to*, Ma'am,” was the submissive, though to me anything but satisfactory, reply.

And yet, alas! had all the burning oil that Ali Baba, or, rather, that Morgiana, poured on the unfortunate thieves been suddenly poured upon the fire of my aunt's temper, it could not have inflamed it more, and she again turned round, and said:

“ Really, Miss Squiggins! I must beg to dispense

with your services as soon as you can suit yourself with another situation; for I engaged you to teach the Miss Sedleys *English*, and not vulgarisms that a kitchen-maid might be ashamed of!"

Poor Squiggins! she cried a great deal that day, or, as she herself would have phrased it, "a deal," while Mademoiselle de Guilleragues said, as soon as we were seated in our own vehicle:

"Comment, ma chère meesse, les grandes eaux jouent encore? pour Marli, ça ne vaut pas la peine." And although this piece of wit was quite lost upon Miss Squiggins, who, not understanding English, even in its simplicities, could not be expected to comprehend French in its intricacies; but she felt and appreciated Nature's universal language, kindness, and all in declaring that "her 'art was fit to break," she pressed Mademoiselle's hand. The latter was in herself no judge of *les finesses* of the English language; but, as she had heard my uncle correct us, and deplore Miss Squiggins's phraseology, she believed in her secret soul, that her coadjutrix was guilty of flagrant grammatical peculations; but, nevertheless, with her usual *politesse de cœur* (that only *real* good breeding), she assumed that she was right, and my Aunt Marley wrong, and therefore said to her:

"I should advise you, my dear Meesse, to apologize to Madame, because —"

"*I!*" fired up Squiggins. "No, Madmeselle: I'll never be so *orridly mean sperited* as to apologize to

those who insult me—indeed, I ave no occasion to do so; for the Countess of Catchyourman—(all of whose daughters, the Ladies Do-pray, I finished, and who, the very first season they were introduced, made the most splendid matches among the ighest nobility, and ave the most magnificent settlements), I'm very sure will help me get a situation any day."

All the grandeur (!) of this speech—that is the "taste, high-life, Shakspeare, and musical glasses" part of it, was lost upon Mademoiselle de Guille-ragues, who, therefore, merely took up the threat of her own ideas where the eloquent Squiggins had interrupted her, and said:

"It is because you are right that you will have the more merit in apologizing to Madame Marley, ma chère Meesse; for when we are right, and yield to those who are wrong (except it be in matters of conscience) we are doubly right."

But all this was a little too quintessentially Christian, metaphysical, and philosophical for Miss Squiggins's capacity, neither of the three being exactly the *chevaux de bataille* of her order; so the consequence was, she tendered her resignation in form the next day, being the sixth and last of our English dictators, which must have been a great saving to my poor uncle, who generally, as in the case of "Squiggin *versus* Marley," thought it necessary to award for the defendant a verdict of half a year's salary. Perhaps,

like that numerous, yet peculiar class of patriots, who

“Have left their country for their country’s good,”

it was for our grammar’s good that poor Miss Squiggins left us, as well, probably, as for that of some future Catchyourmans in the finishing of embryo Do-prays; but, as far as the “Forty Thieves” were concerned, it was “frivolous and vexatious,” for children always settle, not only their own disputes, but also their own accounts, better than grown-up people ever do for them, of which Miss Lily O’Donnell gave a signal proof the very following Sunday, after the “Arabian Nights’ Entertainment,” when *we* appeared at Church in scarlet cloth pelisses, braided with black! with the *obligato* tuck let down in each, showing but too vividly what they *had been* in their palmy days, and whether in humble imitation of the Pioneers or Grenadiers, I know not, but with black *fur* (not exactly bear-skin, but lynx, I believe,) bonnets, with a gold band round them, one young officer, who sat behind us was in such convulsions of painfully-suppressed laughter that, had Lover’s charming song of “Molly Carew” been then written, I’m very sure that, instead of the responses, he would have repeated nothing but—

“Lave off that bonnet, or else I’ll lave on it
The loss of my wandering soul!”

While upon going out of church, just after we had

kissed one battalion of the O'Donnells, the second division came up, headed by Lily, who said with a laugh almost as loud as the cry she had indulged in on the preceding Sunday :

“Why, Mirry! you and Grace look exactly like the Knave and King of Clubs.”

Now surely this was infinitely better, and more germane to the matter, than making a state affair of the ‘Forty Thieves,’ and sending away poor Squiggins on that occasion for her vulgarity, *àpropos* of my pertness; but *che sarà sarà*, and all this was only the beginning of a break-up; for there are times when events begin to gather over families, and when that is the case with them, as with nations, those events progress rapidly, and are not long in culminating. Philip Vavasour, soon after his conversation with my uncle in the library, had returned to England with Lady Paulett and her children; and shortly after my uncle had the satisfaction of receiving a letter from Mrs. Vavasour, stating that her son had of his own accord run down to Wales to pay her a visit; that she found him much improved in every way, especially in the way most unlooked for; namely, his affection for her. All of which she rightly attributed to my uncle; but added, that he was soon to go to Christ Church, and in another year abroad with a tutor of Dingly Vavasour’s selection, a Dr. Hazelden; and then she could not help fearing a relapse, even worse than the original disease.

This letter delighted my uncle ; but as well might we look to find roses without thorns, or light without shadow, as to expect to find even the purest happiness, that which arises from well-doing, without some counterbalancing alloy ; and the same post brought a letter from my Uncle Charles (who had also accompanied Lady Paulett), with an entreaty for a heavy sum of money, as it seemed he had been speculating largely (and by different conversations with, and warnings, my uncle received from Belzoni it appeared), somewhat foolishly in suspension-bridges, and canals of divers sorts. All this preyed upon, and worried my poor uncle ; the more so, that notwithstanding his own fine private fortune, the munificent emoluments of his salary (for in those days all official appointments, whether embassies, governments, or missions, were splendidly remunerated), and notwithstanding the extreme cheapness of everything at —, from French wines, and French silks, down to French gloves, and ribbands, and all sorts of provisions, and house rent, then so ruinously dear in England, yet from the most unpardonable neglect, and the sort of perpetual saturnalia that was allowed unchecked to go on, he about this time found himself some thirty thousand pounds in debt. This was hard, to say the least of it, that he who had made a home for so many should see his own begin to crumble about him ; his household gods mutilated, if not quite destroyed, one after the other, in the shape of

privations and retrenchments, which are ever the hard coin in which extravagance exacts payment from generosity and principle.

In short, he grew ill,—ill with that weariness of soul, for which there is no cure, save in the hands of Him who inflicts it. But how long do many wander in affliction's boundless and barren wilderness before the celestial manna falls to sustain their fainting spirit. It was terrible to hear the inward storm continually bursting forth in sighs, from a mouth round which only the sunniest smiles (all the reflections of hearts made glad) had hitherto pranked, to see the quips and cranks, and merry jests, that used to play at hide-and-seek with gravity in the sparkle of his eye, no longer there, but in their stead, sad epitaphs of tears, too proud to fall, yet still too big to be concealed.

It was terrible, too, to see that he thought he had nothing to look forward to by beginning to look back; for it is not till our hopes (that thick green foliage of the heart) begins to fall in sear and withered disappointments around us, that the tree of life becomes sufficiently bare to enable memory, the mind's piercing but melancholy eye to wander through the long vista of by-gone years. There was in his composition, take him all in all, less of incipient boredom, than in any human being, and never had I known him, when well in mind and body, dwell upon any of his own personal exploits, though of course, the pro-

noun I, was obliged to be used as a peg to hang anecdotes of the celebrities whom he had known, as for example, in the sketch he had given us of Goldsmith. But latterly, when he was glad of a cold as an excuse for keeping his room, and Grace, and Fido, and I were his only guests, he used sometimes to get her to read out the Parliamentary debates of 1780, and onwards, and it so happened that one evening she read out, "Speech of Colonel Paulett, Member for ——, upon the Honourable William Pitt's motion against Catholic Emancipation."

"Why, uncle, that must have been you?" said she.

"Well, I believe, Ma'am, that I am the culprit."

And Grace began to read it out, making neither mistakes nor hesitations, unless, when she came to Latin quotations; but still it was not likely that any successful speaker could bear to hear one of his oratorical *chefs-d'œuvre* mouthed by a child, so upon her stumbling over a passage from Sallust, which was introduced to exemplify his plummet-like power of diving into the internal principles of action, as compared with Tacitus's mere artistic facility of depicting the external motives of safety and interest, my uncle snatched the book from her, and though he merely began by reading it, he was soon transported back to the scene of his former triumphs, and was carried away into declamation, telling us, occasionally, to cry "hear! hear!" which, it must be confessed that we did, with as much zeal, and as little discretion, as the free list *claqueurs* of a popular actor.

“ Ah !” said he, when he had concluded, “ I really ought to be proud of that speech, for I remember Burke coming up to me and saying : ‘ Sir, allow me to shake hands with you, for I feel proud of claiming you as my countryman, as you have this night felt the wrongs of Ireland with an Irish heart, but expressed them with the eloquence of Tully, the sublimity of Plato, the humour of Menander, and the melody, grace, and pathos of Virgil ; in short, young Sir, you were a worthy adversary of the courtly Petronius, whom you opposed, and have proved yourself fully a match for his polished ease, and even for his gravity and minuteness, all worthy of Quintilian though they be.’ ”

And as he recalled a praise of which he might well be proud, not so much from its full measure as from the source from whence it had flowed, the old sparkle lit up his eyes, and he turned gaily to me and said :

“ Now, you puppy, why don’t you learn to read properly, for though we dance very well, yet ‘ a spur in the head is worth two in the heel,’ and then you might be able to spout my speeches, and Pitt’s and Fox’s to boot ; and think of how useful that would be to you, Mirry, against you get into parliament, ha, ha, ha !” and we all laughed so heartily at the idea, that Fido began to bark, and when my uncle called him “ the honourable member for Barkshire,” and rose to answer him in a speech, the pith of which was, “ that the country was going to the dogs,” we laughed still

more, and separated for the night as edified and delighted with each other, as if we had been saying and doing the most sensible things in the world, and not half so tired as if we had been really listening to the nonsense in parliament. But that night I saw visions, and dreamt dreams. The light had again left my uncle's eyes; they were still kind, kind as ever, but sad; and as they fell upon a book seemed too dim, either with time or tears, (to some they are synonymous) to read; then came the heavy sighs that I so dreaded to hear in the day, and their echo seemed to be: "And why don't you learn to read properly, and then you might spout my speeches." When I awoke the next morning I answered the voice of the night, and said, "I WILL."

There are projects too mighty for one heart to contain; they must be confided to another, as some trees require propping, or they would break under their own exuberance; so I sought Mademoiselle de Guilleragues before she had left her room, and told her that my intention was to go to Mr. Waltham, and to get him not only to give me lessons in elocution (for I felt that the Squiggins' Anglo-Saxon argil was not exactly that wherein to transplant Demosthenes) but to teach me Latin, for, so armed, I thought I would some fine day surprise my uncle, and be of some little use in reading to him; for I remembered Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' words: "*It is not enough to wish to serve people, you must also know how to do it.*"

As rivers empty themselves into the sea, so all Englishmen, more or less, have a natural tendency to flow into parliament, even when they have nothing but emptiness to contribute to that political black sea, rightly enough concluding, I suppose, that in all seas there must be froth and foam, as well as salt and gems.

Mr. Waltham was, by no means, exempt from the national legislative ague, and therefore he entered into my scheme the more readily, that in teaching me, he would have an excellent target, to say, "Mr. Speaker," to aim those as yet aimless debates and still-born motions with which, for some years, he had been suffering from protracted gestation. Indefatigably then, for four months, did I labour, and listen, two hours each day, morning and evening, till I began to be amply repaid by Livy's exquisite narrations, and to almost catch the animating fire of Demosthenes. I know nothing more delightful or more exhilarating (and that seems at once to try and to strengthen the wings of one's own spirit) than the soaring into the lofty regions of great men's minds, and with them hovering over that golden Hybla, from which they have culled and hived the honied wisdom of immortality.

Ideas are the hot-beds of ideas, and without those of others, our own, however naturally luxuriant or profound, would soon dwindle and degenerate in the sterile soil of ignorance; for ignorance is a stucco that hides and defaces all things, like those exquisite

pillars of Perbeck marble in the Temple Church which barbarism had walled up and suppressed, but which taste and industry have once more developed. To the ignorant, and verily their name is legion, (nor does ignorance confine itself to the muslin of the world, but is to be found quite as often, if not oftener, among its moustaches and beards,) Aristotle's truism is unavailable, that it requires a clear and logical head to enter into the true meaning and sentiment of a work, and how are people, as Pope has it, to read

“With the same spirit that the author writ,”

if they have never read anything. I grant there is one drawback to allowing “*British Females*” this privilege, which is, that it would greatly tend to diminish, if not to destroy, that indiscriminate man-worship which now prevails to such an idolatrous extent in the United Kingdoms; but as a by no means contemptible equivalent, it would, at the same time, enable women to appreciate real superiority in men, where it exists, which certainly now they are totally incapable of doing; for, however they may run after, and offer the garbage of their worship to *celebrities*, because they *are* celebrities, they are utterly inadequate to sympathize with, or comprehend one glow of that bright intelligence,

“Whose own glory gilds the guerdon of their fame!”

For take them *en masse*, (without the many amiable, gifted, and admirable exceptions which prove the

rule,) that is, according to their own zoological classification as “Females,” there is not on the face of the earth, a more thoroughly selfish, ignorant, inane, and uncompanionable animal, than the genuine, that is, the indigenous and uncultivated “*British Female* ;” but was the species on that account, good domestic drudges and first-rate housekeepers, I could understand men’s thinking it their interest to keep them down at twenty degrees below zero-pitch in the intellectual thermometer ; but they are not, for among all classes, a lamentable ignorance of the capabilities of beef and mutton prevails, and for the most part, their ideas of housekeeping consist in the colloquial blistering ointments of talking servants and weekly bills, and of doing without the decencies of life, or the necessary elements of cookery, out of economy, or in getting bad things at nominally cheap places, and so poisoning people without fear of Judge or Jury ; while they waste as much invaluable time and valuable money, in useless crotchet and not indispensable Berlin-work, as would enable them, if properly and usefully employed, to provide food convenient for their families, and make their homes comfortable, without which, the place one lives in may be one’s *house*, but it is certainly *not one’s home*.

It is, indeed, a melancholy look out, when one considers that more than one half of these charming crochet and lamb’s-wool “*Females*,” (not but what crochet and lamb’s-wool are very good things in their

way, that is, when they are not in anybody else's way, and the still beginning crochets do not interfere with the husbands' never ending *crotchets*); but still it is a lamentable thing, as I was going to say, when one thinks, that half these knitting and knotting "*Females*" are destined only to marry country curates, half-pay captains, or gentlemen occupying the exalted,* though not over-lucrative position of clerks in public offices; and yet the curate's children might go in rags, the captain's handkerchiefs unhemmed, and the clerk be put to his shifts from having all the buttons off his shirts, and the collars and wristbands in fringes before this useful class of "*Females*" would know how to remedy these deficiencies; whereas, had they a little more brains in their heads, and a 'leettle,' ever so little more knowledge, did it only amount to that infinitesimal globule, called "a dangerous thing," they would be able to do even all these mechanical works of necessity perfectly and diligently, for intellect in its propelling power is like steam, as there are very few things to which it may not be successfully applied.

But I am forgetting its great rival, Time, which had now decided the fate of Europe. Two years had passed since the Battle of Waterloo; the English were rushing abroad from all quarters, to astonish the French infinitely more than they had done in the Peninsula; my aunts were preparing to do likewise, to

* The stools of office are always high, whatever the fools of office may be.

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' great delight, and our great dismay, for my uncle Paulett refused to be of the party. Paris was no longer *his* Paris of 1790, and he did not care to revisit it; but the real reason was (as I learnt long after) the terribly deranged state of his affairs; thanks to my aunts' total neglect of all domestic concerns, and my Uncle Charles's horse-leech drains upon his coffers; altogether, he said his presence was indispensable in London.

Whether Don José had anything to do with this, I know not; but he arrived about this time, again covered with gold buttons, and a wound somewhat ulterior to those which heroes receive when seeking "glory at the cannon's mouth," and which he said he had received, while ascending a scaling-ladder, from a shrapnell-shell, at the storming of San Sebastian. The fact of the ladder no one seemed to question—they only altered its geographical position, and placed it at a lady's window; asserting the wound (which was in so defenceless a portion of Don José's person) to have been inflicted by one of the Household Brigade. But let their jibes and jests fly as fast as they might, poor Don José was in no state to give any of them a set down—not even himself—for he never glanced towards a chair but what he seemed to look as if he was reproaching the Fates for not having made him a cherubim. However, what's done can't be undone, and he had gone farther, and fared worse; indeed, the imp of mischief was up and

doing, and it appeared that no one in the house was to escape from its crooked influences. Poor Nelly was ill in bed, having cried herself into a perfect fever, from receiving the route to return to Ireland, as my aunt said they could not possibly take her abroad with them; when, lo! the harlequin's hand of fate conjured a letter on my Aunt Marley's plate at breakfast, which altered all her plans, at least for another year. The letter was from my father, and as it was one of the curiosities of literature, I shall transcribe it:

" Castle Sedley, May 29th, 1816.

" Dear Marcia,

" As you will probably see by the papers, that my old aunt, Sigismund, has, in a fit of pique against her grand-daughter, Mary Scott Barry, now Mrs. Penrose, left me Well's Court, her place in Gloucestershire, worth somewhere between £4,000 and £5,000 a-year, I think it so d——d unfair, that a person brought up to expect it all their lives, should at the eleventh hour lose it, through an old woman's whim, (d——n all women's whims, say I, old or young), that I have resigned every claim upon it, and have made it over to Mary, according to her grandmother's original intention. I write to tell you this, that you may not, on the strength of anything you see in the papers, bother me for money, for I have none. Had I had a family, that is, had my children remained with me, I should have thought it my duty to retain the old woman's

capricious bequest for their sakes; but as they did not, and are so much better off, God's will be done. Love to Grace and Mirry, and tell them not quite to forget their affectionate father.

“GODFREY SEDLEY.”

Now, by some strange process of reasoning, peculiar to my Aunt Marley, or it may be to Irish heads in general, she thought that because her sister had married my father, that she, Marcia Marley, his sister-in-law, had an indisputable right to all his property, and an unquestionable control over him and his.

“Well, was there ever anything so provoking!” said she aloud to my Aunt Bell, to whom she handed over the letter. “Instead of going to Paris, I must now go over to Ireland to prevent this madman from begging himself and his children. I'd sail this very hour had I not promised Lady Laura O'Shindy not to fail her to-morrow, when she, foolishly enough, in compliment to her legal murderer of a husband, gives a sort of *fête* in commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo, where he lost half his left whisker, and carried off a coffee-pot and a keg of brandy from a French *vivandière*.” Most days were boxing-days to me, as far as my aunts were concerned, but I had not the more holidays on that account, and this day was an especially stormy one, and every hurricane was preluded by the pleasing intelligence, that we were now beggars really, and that we could not

always expect to live upon our aunt's charity. It would, indeed, have been a meagre fare. Joy is always a twin, and when sorrow chances to be so, she is never utterly insupportable: and though Grace and I cried bitterly that day, yet we loved each other all the better for being miserable.

Both Nelly and my uncle were ill; she was confined to her bed, and he to his room, so I thought it would be a golden opportunity of utilizing both my culinary and classical acquirements; and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues thought so too, only we had a slight difference as to the whereupon. She, as a Frenchwoman, naturally inclined towards a *bon consommé*; but I, knowing both my uncle's and Nelly's taste (biassed a little by my own), decided in favour of some good mutton-broth. I don't know whether it was owing to the silver saucepan Vatel sent me up, or to my superior skill, but the broth was delicious; so white, so sweet, with the combined essences of carrots, turnips, and celery, a faint whisper of invisible onion murmuring through it, enough salt to prevent the sweetness from degenerating into insipid vapidty, (which is a great mistake either in cookery or women), and no parsley, that worst of herbal heresies, which causes the best broth in the world to find a watery grave: add to all this, there was not a particle of grease in it any more than if it had been made of Egyptian granite. Even Mademoiselle magnanimously confessed that it distanced all the *bouillons*

yet known, not excepting the poor Duke; for as she laughingly said, “*Le cher brave homme, il est trop gras pour être un bouillon parfait.*”

But as I was about to pour the broth into the broth-bason, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues stopped me, and said there was still a *tour de force* left for me to achieve, that of toasting the bread without burning it, or my own face, and cutting it into long narrow slices afterwards, without at the same time cutting my fingers. I liked this part of the business the least; but once *lancée* on the tide of success, one has nothing farther to do, as the Americans say, but to go-a-head, whether it be in making toast, or in making fortunes; only one runs a greater risk of being done brown during the latter, than the former process. My first mission was to Nelly, whom I found still crying. “Come, Nelly,” said I, “take this, and don’t go on crying, or you’ll make yourself seriously ill.”

“I am sariously ill; for I hope you don’t tink it’s joking I am, Miss Miriam, and I on de brink of de divilish gulf, dat doesh be yawning at de fate of ivery ooman onchet or twichet in her natheral life, and de heart of me in schmidereens, just betwixt won ting and anoder.”

“No, I know very well that you are ill, Nelly; but what I mean is, that you will get much worse if you go on crying and starving yourself as you are doing, and that is the reason I have brought you this, and want you to take it.”

“Och! de blessing o’ God on you all de shame, me darlint, for your kindnessh, but shorrow a shup, I cud take of Mishter Vat-hellsh frog-schoupe.”

“But it’s not Mr. ‘Vat-hell’s’ frog-soup;” said I, laughing, “it’s mutton broth that you are so fond of, Nelly, and made by a first-rate cook.”

“Och! itsh mighty little I tink of dem fusht-rate cooksh; I’ve sheen dem, datsh far before ’em at Clan-fuddle.”

“I’ll cut your head off, Nell, if you dare say that you ever knew a better cook than the one who made this broth;” and so saying I uncovered the basin, and forced a spoonful between her teeth.

“Why, then indade I musht shay dat it ish good, ash good ash I iver tashted at Castle Shedley itshelf; itsh Misthus Schtillingflatesh making up, I shuppose; but shure, Missh Miriam, alannah, you shudn’t have been after bringing it me up in de fine schilver bowl dat de quality ates out of; and, indade, I wonder Misthus Schtillingflate put it into it, for she ish, in ginral, mighty particular ash to not letting any of de upschtairish tingsh be ushed by de sharvantsh.”

“But it was not Mrs. Stillingfleet who made it; it was I, Nelly; there, what do you think of that?”

“Och, murder! don’t tell me that I’ve let your modersh daughter make broth for de likesh o’ me! And to tink dat I’ve been baste enough to drink it, and let you schtand fornent me, and wait on me de while, ash if I wash a doochess, just!”

"But wasn't it good, Nelly?" said I, laughing at her ludicrous look of compunction and consternation.

"Good! I blave you! Och! it's ilegant broth dat, dere's do denying, for the Quane of Shaba cudn't have made it better for Sholomon in all hish glory!"

I had never heard before that the Queen of Sheba had officiated in a culinary capacity in favour of Solomon, but, as the compliment was a right royal one, I accepted it, and then said:

"Do you know, Nelly, I have good news for you? Aunt Marley is not going to France. She's going over to Ireland—to Castle Sedley."

"Whatsh dat you tell me, mavourneen?" said Nelly, bounding up in her bed, and clasping her hands. "And are we going—dat ish you, and Miss Grache,—and I, av coorse, to take care of yez?"

"Oh! I don't know anything about that; I only know that Aunt Marley is going, for she said so this morning at breakfast. So you must make haste and get well, Nelly, and then you'll know all about it."

"Och! thin, indade," soliloquized Nelly, apparently unconscious of my presence, and slowly settling first the collar of her nightgown, and then the frills of her cap, "I'm tinkin, if datsh de way de wind blowsh, you may jusht take yourshelf out to Injee in three shipsh ash shoon as you plashe, Misther Jiffs, for itsh not me that you'll git for a figure-head, ash you call

it," and she gave the pillows two most gratuitous thumps.

Seeing that—

“All in the downs the fleet was moored,”

and that her thoughts were now running upon Jeffs' going in some unaccountable manner out to India in three ships (though one, one would think, might have sufficed, even for a greater man), I said:

“Well, good bye, Nelly! and I shall hope to see you down to-morrow.”

Notwithstanding Nelly's flattering comparison to the Queen of Sheba, as I had no idea how she felt upon the occasion of her visit to Solomon, I felt very nervous as I knocked at the door of my uncle's dressing-room. First of all, he might not like being disturbed—not that his annoyances were ever made visible through the medium of temper; next, not knowing who was the *artiste*, he might decline the broth; and, as a climax, he might give me no opportunity of making the grand literary display that I had meditated. Well, what then? If all things did run counter to the way they were planned and wished—as all things generally do—I must only submit; for another of Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' golden maxims was: “Il ne faut jamais boudier le sort,* car il est votre

* You must never sulk with fate; for he is your husband, that is, your lord and master.

mari, c'est-à-dire, votre seigneur et maître;" while poor Squiggins used to dilute and vulgarise this nucleus of wisdom into: "Young ladies should never appear put out in company!"

The great difference between their two systems of education was, that with Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, it was a principle to "always *be* what you would seem," and with Squiggins, "merely to try and appear what you ought to be;" for the former, as far as she could perceive and prevent it, never allowed an *arrière pensée* to stimulate any of our actions, great or small, and would correct us for vulgar expressions, loud talking, and *brusque* and inelegant movements when we were by ourselves in the school-room, as much as if we had been *en représentation* before five hundred persons; while she also exacted as scrupulous a degree of good breeding and good manners (the latter are the former in action) as if we had been strangers, and duchesses, or two *millionnaire* relations, towards whom the slightest under-bred omission, or commission, might jeopard a fortune; whereas poor Squiggins used, it is true, to correct us for having said or done such and such things before *Mrs. Colonel!* this; and *Mrs. Major!* that; the *Earl and Countess* of something else; and *Mr. So-and-so and his Lady!* as, in her ineffable vulgarity, she used to designate people, and would occasionally remind us that it would be good policy to make a purse for such a person, or paint a pair of

screens for another, as they would be likely to do this for us, or give us that, if we did.

Poor Squiggins! I am sorry she was sent away with that irritating little animal in her ear (the more especially as I know she thought scratching was not *genteel*! however desirable she seemed to consider coming to the scratch was, (oh!) as in the case of the Ladies Do-pray, and the Earls, their husbands); but, barring this severe course of homœopathic oral zoology, I think it was lucky that she went, for ever since I have come to years of discretion, I have had an insurmountable horror of the mock and the sham, in all things animate and inanimate, more especially of patent, lacquered best Brummagem drawing-room manners, which, as far as their influence upon the moral tone of society goes, is about the same that driving occasionally into the country for air, would be upon one's health, while all the drains were neglected, and the windows never opened, at home. I hesitated a moment outside the door to ascertain if any one was with my uncle; but all was still. Presently I heard the rustle of paper, accompanied with a deep sigh. This determined me, and I knocked.

"Who is there?" cried my uncle, and again I heard the crumpling of paper, and the sound of a drawer, as if hastily opened and shut.

"It's I, Uncle—M

"Come in, my child." And in I walked.

"I have brought you some broth, and you must take it."

"Thank you, darling, I will; for, oddly enough, I was just wishing for some, but I did not like to ring. I hate being bored with servants when I'm ill. This is capital broth! I suppose Mrs. Stillingfleet made it, for it's beyond Vatel, because what he'd call beneath him."

"No; it was not Mrs. Stillingfleet who made it; it was your new cook,"

"Why, hang it," said my uncle, with a frown, as he put back the spoonful of broth he was in the act of conveying to his mouth, now evidently dreading some new freak of my aunts, "they haven't got a new cook, have they?"

"No," said I, kissing his forehead as I leant over the side of his easy chair, "they have not, but you have; and though only a woman cook, or what Captain Dapperwit calls a plain cook, she can have the first references from members of the nobility, and the *genteel* families where she's lived," added I, concluding with a spice of Squiggins.

"Well, she makes deuced good mutton broth, at all events: where does she come from?"

"The school-room direct, at your service, Sir, for it was I; I, by myself, I! who made it."

"You, Mirry?" cried he, laying down the broth-basin, and looking back at me. "Shake hands then, for you are an honest fellow. I hate your fine ladies who know how to do nothing, and even if they do are ashamed of doing it, forgetting that affection and

pretension are the only things that really vulgarise people ; for few are vulgar from what they are, but many are so from trying to appear what they are not, and for that reason prim vulgarity is always more vulgar than *laisser aller* vulgarity, because there is more pretension about it. But who taught you to be such a good cook? for hang me if I don't think you will soon rival Vatel."

"Oh! for the last three years, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues has made us take lessons, for two hours, twice a-week from Mrs. Stillingfleet, and write out the different bills of fare for the last year for every dinner in the house, though you did not know it; 'et je me flatte,' added I, standing at ease with all Vatel's *hors-d'œuvres* dignity when waiting for orders, 'que Monsieur, n'a pas eu raison de se plaindre du menu?'"

"Mademoiselle de Guilleragues is a deuced sensible woman, and I respect her," said my uncle, taking a pinch of snuff; "the more so," added he, with a sigh, "that I think it is very probable if things go on as they are doing, that I shall not be able to afford even one cook soon, much less three; will you be my little cook then, Mirry?" said he, putting his arm round my waist, and drawing me towards him.

As I kissed him, I saw the terrible large tears again in his eyes; I dreaded those big tears, as German children dread the Erl King. How many moments of mortal struggle there are in life, when if one don't

laugh, one must cry; it is always wiser to do the former if we can, and a matter of conscience to make others do so, if possible; so, crossing my arms, throwing back my head, and pursing up my mouth like Lady Laura O'Shindy, I said:

"Oh, fie! sure you would not have me such an ojus, ungenteel thing as a cook; the mere animal wants are nothing; mental sustenance is everything; for the elevating principle must always be inforced."

"You d——d puppy," said my uncle, flinging a bit of bread at me, and now wiping the tears from his eyes; but, thank heaven, the tears of laughter; "it is very wrong to allow you to take off that silly old woman, I suppose; and yet, for the life of me, I can't prevent you: it amuses me so."

"It amuses me so-so, you mean; for as Lord Frederick says, that is the order of Lady Laura's philosophy."

"Ay," laughed my uncle, "for according to Dapperwit's amendment, she is of the *no go* sect of philosophers; the African who saw ice for the first time called it water fast asleep; but I think he would have called Lady Laura's philosophy, at least her philanthropy, humbug in a stagnant pool."

"Except," said I, "that instead of duck-weed, it is full of goose-weed, so the sooner we get out of it the better. Shall I read to you?"

It was two years since he had heard me read, so the reminiscence was anything but edifying; but he

was two well-bred to tell me so, therefore merely said, patting my cheek :

“No, my child, that would be giving you too much trouble.”

To which I replied—it might be with a slight tone of pedantry—but recollect it was my *début*, and, thank heaven, one don’t speak Latin every day!

“Onus non est appellandum quod cum lætitia feras ac volupte.”

“Why, Mirry!” exclaimed my uncle, with unfeigned astonishment, “as I’m a living man I thought I heard—”

“A dead language,” interrupted I; “you did so, dear uncle, and let me repeat to you in plain English, that that which we do with pleasure, can scarcely be called a trouble; and as I have no pleasure like doing anything for you, I asked Mr. Waltham to have the goodness to teach me Latin and English, that I might be able to read to you properly.”

“You are a dear, good, excellent girl,” cried my uncle, folding me in his arms, “and a clever fellow to boot: there is something in you. I hate your empty people, for like empty casks they are always hollow: the idea was a good one: what put it into your head?”

“You, you put the spur in my head: don’t you remember your telling me, that if I could read properly, then I might be able to spout out your speeches; this was in jest, but I set to work in earnest, and so

poor Mr. Waltham has had no peace, night or day, for the last fourteen months."

"Well, I'm sure his pupil does him great credit."

"You don't know whether I do him credit or not, till you have heard me read," said I, taking up a volume that lay on the table, and which happened to be Pliny's letters, in the original. I read out one of them, my uncle exclaiming every minute:

"Good! very good! excellent! upon my word."

"Pooh," said I, flinging down the book, "I've no patience with a rich man like Pliny being taken unawares, with only a cucumber and a mullet, when his friends dropped into supper; I think the Ancients must have been like Lady Laura O'Shindy, and only had things for show, on the elevating principle, I suppose?" and I got up, and walking to a small bühl book-case, took out an old volume of the Annual Register, and opened it at a speech of my uncle's, upon the Slave Trade, which I instantly began to read, or, rather, to declaim; to be sure I missed the parliamentary *mise en scène*, of a shirt and waistcoat to put my left-hand oratorically into my bosom, as Mr. Waltham always did, or nether garments, with convenient pockets, even if there was nothing in them; but there is nothing like resource, so I made my spencer do duty for all three; and it appears I spoke the speech so well, at least so entirely to my uncle's satisfaction, who, by the bye, very improperly kept walking up and down, and crying "hear, hear!"

though he should have formed part of the stuffing of his chair, and held his tongue, as I addressed him as "Mr. Speaker," for when I concluded he said:

"'Pon my word I'm not jesting, I never heard anything better; enunciation, modulation, emphasis, and the inflection of the voice, all perfect; the action graceful, concentrated, and natural; by George! Mirry, it's a thousand pities that you are not a boy, for decidedly you'd make a figure in the House."

"Dear me, uncle mine!" laughed I, spinning round, and making what children call a *cheese*, "I'd a great deal rather make a curtsy out of it;" and I might have added, had I been old enough to have had the sense; but thirteen is always thirteen, till it becomes thirty, when with ladies it seldom gets beyond that; yes, in truth and great wisdom, I might have added: "or a bason of mutton-broth;" for verily one bason of good mutton broth is of more efficacy to the constitution (if not very much shattered indeed) than ninety and nine washy speeches in Parliament.

CHAPTER VI.

IN three days, we were to leave —— for London. The house was all in confusion, not with that agreeable effervescent sort of excitement which precedes a pleasant journey, but with that desolation of confusion, that thorough stripping, which is the forerunner of a final break-up; and yet nothing, save the mute eloquence of the bare book-shelves and empty wardrobes, told us at that time, that we were about to leave the poor old house for ever; but leave it as we may, the house in which we have passed our first happy, careless, but cared-for years, never leaves us, but through all the after-vicissitudes of life, its trials, or its triumphs, its poverty or its wealth, its hopes or its fears, its unmixed misery, or its compound weal and woe; *that* house is still our refuge through every storm, embosomed deep within the shelter of our

hearts; to it we return, wending in thought its every nook and corner, and finding in each, green spots of hallowed ground, made such by some word, or look of love, from eyes or lips now closed for ever. Even childhood's most bitter tears, first shed in that old house, become strung pearls upon the long chain of memory. When all is dark and drear before and around us, we can still look back and see the little window or the big one, as it may be,

“Where the sun came peeping in at morn!”

and the bee and the butterfly were waiting for us in the garden, while with still sleepy eyes we watched the moats that danced beside the sun-beams, undecided, which we'd rather be, till quite aroused by the myriad sounds that tell the world it's day, we rose to welcome it with ever-budding hopes and buoyant hearts, sure it would bring us some pleasure, or some good. Oh, false! capricious! cruel day! to grow so changed and churlish, that in after years we should wake sighing, and rising, dread to meet you!

We were dressing to accompany my Aunt Marley to one of Lady Laura O'Shindy's botheropedias, as Nelly so truly and aptly called those philosophical gatherings, not to say festerings. Bloom Belzoni had come to wish us good bye, as she was going to Paris with her father. She, Grace, and I, were laying all sorts of plans for the future, in that dear, delightful

Paris, which Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had imbued us with an idea was synonymous with Paradise (as it really almost is). Detachments of the poor O'Donnells were crying in different parts of the room (the British Grenadiers' "occupation" being "gone," I suppose it was necessary to have British volun-tears), though we had made the handsomest testamentary dispositions in their favour, of our books and play-things, and I had that very morning presented Lily with a very splendid dog's-eared edition of the "Arabian Nights," in the fly-leaf of which appeared the following valuable autograph:

"TO THE FORTY THIEVES,

"FROM THEIR AFFECTIONATE FRIENDS,

"THE KNAVE AND KING OF CLUBS."

There was a sort of modern marriage going on between me and my gloves, for, among some dozens, I was hunting for a pair, *assisted* by two maids. Had Miss Squiggins remained long enough to *finish* us, there would have been nothing remarkable in my thus running after fellows, and being hand-in-glove with them as soon as ever they appeared; but as Mademoiselle de Guilleragues did not approve of such proceedings, either in dressing-rooms or drawing-rooms, it was fortunate for me that she was not there, though she was not long absent; for soon after, the door opened, and Nelly, in a white gown, rather short, with

one narrow flounce quite at the edge of the hem, like a pillow-case, a white silk shawl, a white straw bonnet, much in the shape of a coal-scuttle, only decorated at respectful distances with little white satin ribbon bows, like those on the tail of a kite, white silk gloves, and a pocket-handkerchief, about the size of a breakfast-cloth, in her hand, now entered, literally supported by Mademoiselle de Guilleragues and Mrs. Stillingfleet, looking almost as white as her gown.

"Why, Nelly, how smart you are!" laughed Grace and I, both in a breath.

"Not yit—not yit," murmured Nelly, enigmatically, as she dived into her capacious pocket, and drew forth some sibylline-leaves, in the form of printed shop-cards; "not yit, for itsh afther, for de resth of one's life dat one ginerally shmartsh for it," here she groaned. "God in Hiven iver blessh, watch over, and purtect yez, me darlintsh, ish de lasht, ash it hash alwaysh been de fust prayer of Nelly Bawn."

"Nonsense, Nelly: you're not going to leave us, surely?"

"Lave yez; do you tink itsh sticks, or schtonesh I'm made of, dat I'd lave yez, if I washn't dhruve to it fairly, no, but unfairly turned away jusht on de wide world to go to dish troochin? De misthess says she's not going to schtay in Ireland, only for sixsh monts, and dat she manes to put yez to schule for dat time in Loonun, and din take yez over to Franche, where she says she won't take me, becasse I'd be

of no ushe, and what ushe I should like to know ish half de sharvantsh in dish houshe, espeshly all dim powthered baboonsh of futmen, who are no more use nor sho many ring-tailed monkeys, only not half sho divarting. Sho ye see deres noting left for me, but to put an ind to myshelf, and dat's what I'm going to do."

"For shame, Nelly," said Grace; "you, who are so good and so religious, how can you be so wicked as to even think of such a thing; and how do you suppose we should feel if you did?"

"Oh, indade, Missh Grace, tanksh be to de Lord, you're now grown bote such fine, big, knowledgeable young ladiesh, dat I'm sure yez'll shoon be reconshiled to my fate, and argey dat itsh de way of de world; and whin onceht a ooman hash made oop her mind to put an ind to hershelf, itsh little matter how shoon she doesh it."

"Nelly, do go back to bed," said I, "for I'm sure you must be delirious; no woman in her senses could think of doing what you talk so coolly about."

"Thru for ye, Missh Miriam, darlint; no ooman in her shenshes would make over de fee-shimple of hershelf to any divil; and it only showsh de number of poor demented half-witted crathers dere ish in de world."

"Well, as you have proclaimed yourself one of them, we must take care to prevent your putting your horrible threats into execution," said Grace.

“Too late, ma yourneen, too late; de prashte and de parshon is bote waiting.”

“The priest and the parson both waiting; surely, no ministers of any church can be found to abet such wickedness,” broke in Grace.

“Itsh just de prashtes and parshonsh dat doesh be always abetting dish sort of wickedness,” said Nelly, “for widout dem it cudn’t go on; sho I recomment me shoul to de Almighty, and may he forgive Fader O’Toole, and de Riverind Ulic Bindfasht, if dey do ash much mischief to me in making me Mishess Jiffs, ash Fader Philarity did in making me Mishess Bawn.”

“Ha! ha! ha! so you’re only going to be married, Nelly,” cried I and Grace, laughing immoderately.

“*Only* going to be married! och! listen to how de innohent crathers talk,” cried Nelly, clasping her hands and turning up her eyes; “de very wordsh dat Judy Mc Manus said (barring dat it wash hanged instead of married), when in de Rebillion dey said of one of Napper Tandy’s relations dat wash taken alive, dat he was to be transhpoorted for life, ‘not a bit of it,’ saysh Judy, ‘he’s only going to be hanged.’”

“Well, but I’m sure, Nelly,” said we, still laughing, “Jeffs seems a very good man, and so fond of you.”

“Och, to be sure, av coorse; dere alwaysh sho fond of one before dey get one into dere clutches; and for goodnessh, dey all bang de world beforehand, but

aft'her, dey bang noting but dere wivesh and de doorsh whin dey go out to divart demshelves."

"Well, thank goodness, it's only being married that you call putting an end to yourself, Nelly," said Grace.

"Sho it is, sure, Missh Grace; for I know no more sartin way for a ooman to put an ind to herself den to be trown into de condemned cell of matrimony, and manacled wid a husband; sure, after dat, dere's no more of her freewill left dan a hungry cat would lave of a fresh herring. Arn't we toul't, dat 'in Heaven dere's neider marrying, nor giving in marge;' and av coorse it's just dat one sinsible an humane circumstance dat makesh it Heaven, oderwishe dish world might sarve one's turn very well to continue in."

"But tell me, Nelly," said I, after I had pondered a little over this last theological nut that she had given us to crack, which cogitation ended at least in a doubt leaning to her side of the question, and—

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds,"

so at least says the poet of the heart, Tennyson; "Nelly, tell me, are you going to remain at —, or to return to Ireland, when you are Mrs. Jeffs?"

"Neider de one nor de oder, Missh Miriam; for do Misshesh Marley tinksh I'm not fit for Franche, and too bad entirely for Loonun; yet niverdeless,

itsh in Loonun I'm going to live; and do av coorse I cudn't expect dat such a grand gintleman as Sur George (long life to him) wud iver put hish nose into such a plache ash mine; yet maybe, Missh Miriam, you dat can make him do anyting, would be afther pershuading him shumtimesh to put shum of my schnuff into hish beautiful noshe;" and so saying, she placed in my hand one of the cards she held in hers, whereon was inscribed in irreproachable copper-plate, with many flourishes:

ELLEN JEFFS,

TOBACCONIST AND DEALER IN ALL SORTS OF FOREIGN SNUFFS,

FLEET STREET, TEMPLE BAR.

I promised to use my interest (how well that sounds if only *à-propos* of getting a person to deal at a snuff-shop, or even of the still more petty retail trading of a Whig Ministry), and then said:

"I suppose, Nelly, Jeffs remains with the yacht, as I don't see his name on the card?"

"No, Missh; for de yacht ish sould to Lord Frederick, Jiffs tells me, afther it hash taken yez and Sur George to England."

"Then I'm surprised Jeffs don't help you to keep this shop."

"He doesh sho, Missh."

"Then I wonder his name is not on your shop-card?"

“Schtick him up, indade! What would hish name do dere, when he’sh promised to kape himself quite and mannerly, and not be lording and masthering it over me in any way? and if itsh authority he wantsh, I’ve made him free of Mike Bawn’s, me late plague’s shillalah, and given him de run of Dermot’s shoulders, and shure dat’s exercoise enough for him, for dat spalpeen of a Dermot will be the death of me yit, for itsh only lasht wake dat Fader O’Toole toul me dat he’s alwaysh up at Fort Goliah among de sojers, psalm-singing wid dat great black crocodile of a Calvinist, Colonel Clavering; and shinche he wint to sarviche at Lady Laura O’Shindy’s (dere’s a name to sit down for life wid), he’sh scho schloppy and sho dirty dat de pig at home ish a buck to him; he’ll shomtimesh have dat falde of buther-cupsh coat dat she callsh a livery, schtuck togedder wid won button acrosch hish chist, and his arums not crammed into the schlavesh itshelf, and inshtead of hish yellow plush leg-shamers, he’ll have hish ould corderoysh and brogues on, and de handsh of him ash black as two five-fingered bogs, and she niver to see it or shay a word about it, but just strutting about dat Donybrook Fair of a plache of hersh, wid all de card-board grandeur of a tragedy-quane in a stage-play; a purty short of mishthruss for a boy to have, who wishesh to rishe in the world, and become a futman! Och! but itsh Mishter Ulic Bindfast, sho schtiff and sho grand, ash if de whole binch of bishops was

rowled up in dat white stucco cravat of hish, dat won't be plased at my kaping him; and I can tell you all dish, me darlints, when we're on de say, for de Lord be praished I'm going ash far ash England wid yez."

Here Mole appeared to say that the carriage was at the door; and my Aunt Marley was waiting for us. The grin on his face did more to expedite the departure of the bride elect than any thing else could have done, while taking a hasty but affectionate leave of Bloom and the O'Donnells, we made the best of our way down stairs.

CHAPTER VII.

ALAS! for my readers, I am neither Hogarth nor Cruikshank; and therefore, how hope ever, with merely my “grey-goose quill” to convey to them even a faint idea of the Palazzo Vascello; for such was the euphonious and grandiloquent name which Lady Laura O’Shindy had bestowed upon the dirtiest lodging in the dirtiest street in ———; wholly and solely because it had the disadvantage at the back of having an old rickety balcony hanging over a river called the Onda, which was a sort of supplement to the sea, in short a kind of marine infirmary to the harbour of ———, where all the foundered and dilapidated vessels rode at anchor, or underwent repair, sending up into Lady Laura’s domicile the combined but by no means balmy, odours of pitch, tar, bilge-water, and defunct cats and cabbage-stalks, with which its muddy waters were strewed; and so far it certainly did resemble the Adriatic, that

lethargic sea, for which the poets of all ages have burdened their lays with more lies than its waves can ever wash away.

This likeness it was, which no doubt suggested to Lady Laura's "love of the beautiful," the idea of bestowing that at once nautical and Venetian cognomen upon her abode, and also of christening a crazy bridge that conducted from a marine-store shop at her side of the river, to a large warehouse for weighing merchandise on the opposite bank, the Bridge of Sighs! though, as Captain Dapperwit observed, as all the sighs came from the mouth of the river, it was much to be deplored that it had not a sweeter breath; but as above the mast-heads of the valetudinarian vessels rose in the distance the tufted foliage of the patriarchal trees of a sort of *prado*, or *corso*, in short, the fashionable drive of the — ites. Lady Laura voted her charming *locale* the best *sitti-ation* (as she pronounced it when she wanted to be very English; that is, more English than the English), the very best *sitti-ation* in —; and Lord Frederick agreed that it was certainly a *prime* one, as her rooms were over a gun-maker's shop, though it was to be hoped her landlord was honest, or an overcharge might be fatal.

In short, many were the atrocious puns that the perfumes and pretensions of the Palazzo Vascello gave rise to, among others, that the Old Ship in plain English would have been a better name for it. In

order to attain to this amphibious paradise, you entered by a dark, dirty, narrow side passage, certainly exceedingly like, both in smell and size, to a Venetian vicolo, having groped about a dark closet, called "The Hall," you got into a sort of narrow, creaking, cork-screw round-about, which, more to your surprise than pleasure, turned out to be the stairs, as it was; however, when you did get up, you arrived at another part of the show—namely, a small door, with four small panes of greenish glass, upon peeping through which (a recreation you were allowed to take in the handsomest manner without being asked to pay anything) you beheld a carpet-broom, standing like a wooden sentry in one corner, a dust-shovel lying like a discarded shield on the floor beside it, and in the opposite corner a hair-broom, upon which hung a kitchen rubber (intended no doubt to represent a standard-bearer, for everything at Lady Laura's was intended to represent something that it was not—from the sentiments downwards), while in the small window overlooking the Onda stood an immense nettle plant, propped against a frame, and hung with little coloured lamps, always ready at a moment's notice to shed their light upon an *impromptu festa*.

Now the superficial reader may think that there was nothing very remarkable (unless it was its rarity) in all this; but the surprise consisted in a slip-shod cook-maid throwing open the door, and asking if you would not like to leave your shawls, or other traps, in the

conservatory! By which means you were pithily and dexterously informed of a remarkable fact that you never could have divined of your own unassisted accord, namely, that on account of the nettle plant, a standard broom, and the kitchen rubber—which I suppose botanists would designate the *Guenillia Grandifudgea*—this was called the conservatory. Upon traversing a corridor of a yard and a half in length, and half that quantity in width, an opposite door was thrown open, and you were ushered into two small, very low rooms, with rafters across the ceiling, like those of an old-fashioned English farm-house; but to hide these beams, Lady Laura had cut out luxuriant wreathes of ivy in green glazed paper, attached to stems of brown worsted, and stuck on with large corking pins, the heads of which, when seen, would do very well, she said, to imitate stars, trying to pierce through the foliage.

The paper on these low walls was truly magnificent, consisting of colossal figures in colossal galleys, as gorgeous as the unrestricted use of red, blue, green, lilac, and yellow paint could make them. These galleys, and their occupants, were intended to represent Cleopatra sailing down the Cydnus (only judge then of the crew's surprise at seeing all this green paper ivy hanging over them); but if they were alarmed at so unheard-of a phenomenon, sarve 'em right, as they should have kept their eyes fixed upon the large white glass bead, or Roman pearl, which Lady Laura had,

with her usual exquisite taste and historical accuracy, stuck by means of perforation into the brim of every cup, out of which each of the three-and-twenty Cleopatras in the two rooms were drinking; and indeed, to judge by the huge amphori strewing the galleys, it would appear that the Egyptian Queen must have been addicted to that species of hilarity; though, as the weakest always goes to the wall, we may at least hope that none of the beverages represented upon Lady Laura's paper were intoxicating.

This paper she invariably called the tapestry; and wherever looking-glasses could be poked from ceiling to floor, like an auction-room, they were inserted, so that the poor little rooms were stilettoed through and through with the envious rents made by these treacherous mirrors, which were for ever casting invidious reflections upon the strange specimens of the human species, wont to congregate in those saloons. I forgot to mention, that from the centre beam of the centre room was suspended, as a "wonderful lamp," (and a most wonderful one it certainly was,) a pink satin stuffed Cupid; and if his heart was only half as full (of bran or anything else) as other portions of his person were, it must indeed have been well nigh bursting. It was in his quiver, amid a forest of paper arrows, that the candle was concealed, and the point of a pair of snuffers was ingeniously contrived to represent the barb of the arrow (which never went off), that he was continually aiming from a card-board bow,

twisted with blue satin ribbon ; while the "Idalian Boy" was "kicking up his heels" in an opposite direction in the ivy waste paper office, some were ill-natured enough to remark that he looked more like an owl in an ivy-bush than a Cupid.

The floors of the rooms were curiously undulating ; so much so, indeed, that they would have delighted Capability Brown ; and Lady Laura, to make the most of them, had covered them with a green carpet, richly strewn with blue and yellow flowers (another surprise for Cleopatra.) From the unevenness of the rooms, they looked rickety, and *maladive* ; and from the little patches of gilding stuck wherever either wood or plaster could be got to submit to the innovation, they looked as if they were undergoing a course of anti-dingy sunset pills : yet, nevertheless, the complaint seemed to gain ground ; for the very crooked bay window gave these apartments a decidedly dropsical appearance. It would not be possible to sit in judgment upon the chairs, as only half of them were intended to afford sedentary repose, the seats of the other half being composed of blue satin, with wreaths of pink crape roses in bold relief, and the thorns, strong and sturdy, like an eruption of traps and spring-guns, most effectually "warning people off of their premises."

Among poor Lady Laura's numerous absurd delusions, was an idea, that professing a love for all sorts of nasty, ugly birds, made her appear youthful, innocent,

and romantic. A real love for anything is an ennobling feeling; and had a person the monomania of being fond of a spider or a toad — though one could not sympathise with the *engouement* — one would nevertheless respect it. But Lady Laura was incapable of being really fond of anything; she had too much vanity to be so, for vain people have no affections, and from the incapacity of loving anything arose the overflowing benevolence of professing to love everything. The result of this ornithological profession was, that her rooms were infested by an old jackdaw, who, while stealing the sugar for himself, used to talk of “the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers,” and, in knocking down cups and glasses, jabbered amain about the “elevating principle;” while in the balcony was a startling instance of the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties in the shape of an infant parrot, who, not being able to speak fluently, was in the habit of doing all its ideas in screams, for as yet it had acquired but two phrases from the source it was in the habit of deriving information: the one was, “D—d stingy old dust!” an energetic, though not very polished or high-bred piece of declamatory eloquence, which it had picked up on board the different vessels from the sailors with whom Lady Laura was in the habit of holding affable and philanthropic converse of a morning over the balcony, though, with truly feminine delicacy, she had never been known to encourage what she justly called their *ojus* love of brandy and

tobacco by giving them money. Now, it must in fairness be owned that Lady Laura's non-donative habits did not arise solely from parsimony; and had she been content to be honestly poor, without insisting upon being fine, no one would have had any right to animadvert upon her shabbiness—at least, those who did so would have had such bad hearts, that their vetos would have been little worth. But it was her eternal straining after effect, and subpœnaing false pretences, such as giving gooseberry-wine, and calling it champagne; or, if taxed with the fact, by some remorseless Nemesis, of Fudge! she would say it was quite as dear as champagne, only she preferred it. The same with bad tea, and bad bread; all of which Lady Laura—according to her *ipse dixit*—had the misfortune to pay dearer for than any other persons did for good, only she of course preferred the former. Neither had any one any business to animadvert upon where, or how, she chose to live; but from the moment she packed people together, like the poor animals in Smithfield, and called these *Folkmotes*, parties, then everybody had a legitimate right to criticise and to complain, and poor Lady Laura entailed upon herself commentaries far more voluminous than Cæsar's. Diamonds may be dispensed with even at Court, if one has not got them, but paste puts a plebeian stamp upon all who are guilty of it, which evidently proclaims the wearer unfit to be there.

No one, I should hope, would be either so ill-bred, or so unfeeling, as to laugh at a young lady for appear-

ing even at a state ball, in a plain muslin dress, had it only cost two-pence a yard, provided it were perfectly clean, untumbled, and well made; but did this same young lady attempt to aggravate the original sin of the twopenny muslin, with common, or dirty artificial flowers, or manacles of mock bracelets up to her elbows, then indeed she becomes as fair game as any that is to be met with from the first of August to the end of January inclusive.

But to return to the infant parrot. Pythagoras has observed, in his golden verses, that "Power is never far from Necessity;" now, as no necessity can well be stronger than that of correcting any young person (even a mere parrot) at the onset of their educational career for using such inelegant expressions as the ones the birds had picked up from the sailors, Lady Laura felt she possessed the power of correcting her feathered favourite, and therefore always exercised it, by immediately crying out: "Oh, fie! Philomella, fie!" for she said "Polly was such an ojus, vulgar name," that she exchanged it for that of Philomella, and most devoutly did every one who had the misfortune to make the parrot's acquaintance wish, that like her namesake, the Athenian king's sister, she also had had her tongue cut out; the consequence was, that after its epic of "D—d stingy old dust!" Philomella always edified every one by her speedy repentance (even those hardened miscreants the sailors), in repeating her *meá culpá* of "Oh, fie!"

But as by this time I am sure Lady Laura must, like a second Cybele, have donned her tower of petrified barley-water, and be sailing about her rooms, either expecting or receiving her guests, with that indescribable air of prim bombast and starched foolscap so peculiar to her, and which Nelly designated "de card-boord dignity of a tragedy queen in a stage play," having for the reader's edification attempted to describe the Palazzo Vascello, it is high time that I should return to my Aunt Marley, in order to arrive with the rest of the company in state. One thing only I have forgotten to mention, which is, that the lower regions of the Palazzo were not only of infinitely smaller dimensions than its upper ones, but likewise so dark, as to entail eternal lamp-light. And woe to the vestal cook-maid, if she ever allowed it to go out! for the four flags, called the kitchen, were so torn with intestine commotions between rats, centipedes, beetles, and cockroaches, that the neutral party, consisting of the cook, Dermot, and the cat, were sure to have to fly for their lives from the fierce onslaughts of the belligerents; and in vain the fugitives complained to Lady Laura, and implored the redress of a surveyor, that they might see daylight through these civil wars.

Lady Laura only told them not to give themselves airs, when they were living in the very best "sittiation" in —, for, strange to say, with all her philanthropy, she had some peculiar notions respecting servants and "common people," one of which was, that

like cameleons, they could live upon air (and also without it), and the other, that like empty packing-cases, they might be poked anywhere; the consequence was, that she and her domestics were always at issue upon these Poor Law Amendments, and though the board sat every day, the *Commons* were never agreed.

“Come, make haste, Lord Frederick,” said my Aunt Marley to the former, who now appeared crossing the lawn with a bulky dark substance under his arm, about the size of a large hedgehog or porcupine, “make haste, or Lady Laura will never forgive us if we are late.”

“I beg you ten thousand pardons, if I have kept you waiting,” said he, as he got into the carriage, and took the package from under his arm, which turned out to be a small barrel in rosewood, capable of containing about a quart, “but here is the cause of my delay; I was obliged to lay in water at Cologne, as we are going on board Lady Laura O’Shindy’s *Bucentoro* to-day:” and as he spoke, he drew a silver cork from the bung-hole of the little barrel, and inhaled a long respiration of Eau de Cologne.

“You d—d conceited puppy!” said my uncle, laughing, as he slapped Lord Frederick’s hand with his own glove.

“Ah! it’s all very fine, my dear Sir George, for you,” laughed the young man; “you have never yet been there. All you know about it is, that it is over a gunmaker’s shop, and the whole world are

aware that you are not afraid of the smell of powder. But only wait till you get there, that's all, and you'll have the goodness to let me know how you feel this evening."

It was quite true that my uncle never had had the misfortune of being in Lady Laura's palazzo before; but as he was going away, and this *fête* was to be the last, and she had made a point of his coming, and he never could bear to disoblige any one, however obliging them might put him out of his way, he had on this occasion accepted the invitation. Lady Laura was quite incapable of appreciating such a character as his; it was too real, too unaffected, too unostentatious. A person who never let his right hand know what his left hand did, who never talked fine sentiments, but was always doing fine actions, was quite beyond the comprehension of her tinsel and clap-trap nature, but as like most of your philanthropic levellers, she was a most indefatigable and servile tuft-hunter, and he was *the* great personage of ———, she was exceedingly anxious to have him at one of her gatherings, or rather to have it to say that he had been there; for she in herself appreciated, or enjoyed nothing beyond the degree she thought others would envy or esteem her for possessing it; the outdoing other people (as she thought), was her tariff of felicity in all things.

"Well, who comes with me?" asked my uncle. It was finally arranged that Mr. Waltham, my Aunt

Bell, and Grace should go in the carriage with him, and I with my Aunt Marley, and the two aides-de-camp.

“Now, Dapperwit, my boy,” said Lord Frederick, “I know you are hard up, and I’ll give you two ponys if you’ll discover the meaning of any one thing the O’Shindy says to-day.”

“Thank you, my dear fellow, you are very kind ; but if you made it a hundred, I couldn’t do it ; in the first place, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, and I suspect the meaning of anything Lady Laura says, is like the unfortunate gentleman’s horse, which was difficult to catch, and worth nothing when caught.”

My Aunt Marley being herself a beauty, all in joining in the laugh against Lady Laura’s personal absurdities, always affected to defend her, and say it was too bad of people to laugh at her for her appearance ; but when her philanthropy and philosophy were arraigned, then the thing became personal to herself, and she felt called upon to fight her own battles in defending her friend.

“Really,” said she, “it is a great shame of you to ridicule poor Lady Laura as you do, for she is a most enlightened woman, and greatly in advance of her age.”

“At all events her nose is,” said Dapperwit, “for I never look at it without thinking of the story of the long-nosed Paisley weaver, who, happening to get a blow upon his proboscis one day, and having no court-plaster at hand, stuck one of his own gummed

tickets on the wound, which chanced to have written on it, 'warranted to contain three hundred and fifty yards!' Now, as 'good wine needs no bush,' so Lady Laura's nose does not require any such printed puff, for all who see it, feel quite convinced that it must at least be that length."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Lord Frederick, "the great puzzle to me is how so very ignorant, and thoroughly illiterate a person as she is, could have thought of getting into the 'blues!' for on no point can you take her that you don't find her in a perfect state of innocence, both as to the literature of the past and present day, so that talking to her is as arduous an exertion as wading knee-deep through a bog, or throwing a ball against a mud wall."

"You can't have everything," replied Dapperwit, sententiously.

"Everything! why what do you mean, Dapperwit?"

"I mean, my dear fellow," replied the latter, "that if Lady Laura is not *deep red*, her nose is."

"Really, you are too bad," laughed my Aunt Marley, throwing back her head, so as to show the profile of her own beautiful and delicately white nose to advantage.

"You have heard, I suppose, Mrs. Marley," said Lord Frederick, "that when O'Shindy applied for his Waterloo medal, it was at first refused, on the plea that they were only given to men of tried valour; the Captain fired, and swore that if undaunted bravery

could entitle him to it, he had better claims than any man in the army, not excepting the Duke himself, which assertion he said he had the means of proving; accordingly the next day he sent his wife's picture to the Duke of York; and the Commander-in-chief fully acknowledged his claims."

We were all still laughing at this story, when Lord Frederick, seizing his *eau de Cologne* barrel, and exclaiming, "Oh! Heavens above, and drains below, here we are!" sunk back as if fainting, as he added: "Have you got a fan, Dapperwit?"

"To fan your flame for Lady Laura, I suppose?" laughed the other.

"Profane youth, forbear!" said Lord Frederick, deluging his pocket-handkerchief with *eau de Cologne*. "Really, the woman ought to be indicted as a nuisance, for living in such a place."

"Her offence is rank, and smells to Heaven," said Dapperwit, with ludicrous solemnity, raising his right hand, and pointing upwards. Here the carriage stopped before the narrow passage leading to the odoriferous quay, in the centre of which passage Lady Laura's palazzo was situated.

"Dapperwit," said Lord Frederick, faintly, as the door was opened, and the steps lowered, "do your duty, and hand Mrs. Marley out. My dear Miss Miriam, pray assist me; I shall be happy to render you the same service at any other time, and in any other place."

"Come, Farnham," laughed Dapperwit, "or I'm afraid Lady Laura will discover a new organ in your head—the organ of Hang-me-if-I-can-ativeness."

"Perhaps," said I, laughing, and holding the barrel of *eau de Cologne* to his nose, "the barrel-organ may counteract its baneful effects."

"Thanks, sweet girl, as young gentlemen in genteel comedy say, when they kiss a piece of blank paper, with a yellow wafer in it, supposed to be a love letter," said he, kissing my hand. "Jeems," continued he, as soon as the former had helped my Aunt Marley to alight, "give me your arm. You should always give precedence to the weaker sex; lords first, and ladies afterwards."

Jeems was in one of those painfully-ticklish positions peculiar to his order, when footmen are perfectly riddled with random jests, and dare not retaliate upon one of them, even with the mildest smile.

My Aunt Bell, Grace, and my uncle, having also alighted, and the latter having involuntarily put his handkerchief to his nose, and exclaimed:

"God bless me! this is indeed terrible!"

"Ah!" said Lord Frederick, first pointing to my uncle, and then tapping his barrel,

"There's a valiant fellow,
They jest at perfumes, who never smelt vascello!"

Here a poor old woman, who swept the crossing opposite the Palazzo, held out her hand, and implored

his charity. "They say that charity covereth a multitude of sins. I'll try," said he, and flung her half-a-crown; but, missing his aim, the coin fell, and rolled on the pavement; but before the old woman could attempt to look for it, my uncle stooped down, picked it up, and gave it to her; for

"Thus he bore without abuse,
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use."

"May the Lord in Heaven bless your noble Honour," said the old woman, with tears in her eyes, more touched by his kindness than grateful for Lord Frederick's money. "Ah!" added she, "that was worth all the How-d'y-do's in the world."

This was an allusion to Lady Laura's daily benevolences, (which were about as beneficial to the people at large as Edward IV.'s), and to this old woman in particular, who swept the crossing, used to consist in the following amiable little monologue:

"Good morning, Ma'am." "A fine day, Ma'am."
"I think we shall soon have rain, Ma'am; which will be all the better for your trade, Ma'am."

All of which, though exceedingly affable, and condescending in so great a lady, as Lady Laura considered herself, yet, with regard to the poor sweeper, was nothing more than so much waste palaver; for

as far as she was personally concerned, even the very smallest coin of the realm would have been of more use. But that Lady Laura, from the principle of the pernicious effects of relieving individual want, never gave.

It appears that like sin and sorrow, we arrived at the Palazzo at the very moment that Colonel Clavering, like a second Adam, was being expelled from Paradise, as Lady Laura called her charming abode, though I cannot say that Dermot looked the least like an angel, even an avenging one; for though he had his arms in his coat-sleeves on this grand occasion, and moreover had emptied the dredging-box promiscuously on his head, that on this auspicious day, at least, he might appear the *fleur* of footmen, yet had he retained his corderoys, and discarded what his mother called his yellow plush leg-shamers. Colonel Clavering (who, as Nelly said, was trying hard to pervert him to Calvinism) it seems had come to Dermot that morning to try to convince him of the wickedness of staying to attend his mistress's worldly and iniquitous gaities, instead of coming up to Fort Goliah to prayers as usual; though, sooth to say, it was not the conventicle's spiritual delights that attracted him half so much as the spirituous pleasures of a pious public-house up there, called "The Eternal Perdition," and the sign of which was really a wonder, even for that peculiar branch of the art, as it consisted of a

large heart, surrounded by very fierce kitchen-fire looking flames, under which was encircled strange to say:

“ENTERTAINMENT FOR MAN AND BEAST.

“ALL KINDS OF SPIRITS NEAT AS IMPORTED.”

But on this day, Dermot was not to be persuaded; either by threats or entreaties. “Sur George was coming,” he said, “and he couldn’t lave.” From entreaties, Colonel Clavering proceeded to threats, and we arrived just at the interesting moment when the latter was assuring Dermot (with an earnestness that would have led one to suppose that he, Colonel Clavering, had received the information from private and undoubted sources) that he would to a certainty be d—d. Now instead of being grateful for the earliest intelligence, Dermot considered that the Colonel was becoming personal, and therefore taking him by the shoulders, and thrusting him out of the door, he said:

“Och, din, Colonel Goliah, wid de blessing of God! may be you’ll de d—d first; at all events I cudn’t tink of going before me betthers. So afther you, Sur, if you please; and as you same to be postmaster-gineral of the infarnel rajions, by all de sartin fax you do be continually recaving from dere, perhaps you’ll just drop me a line, to say how you pass your time dere, only don’t lay on de brimshtone too thick, as I

happen to have a particklar aversion to de smell of it; and if it was bad smells I wanted, dere's plinty to chuse from here, and whin I say plinty, mind I only spake of de smells, for far be it from me to defame de plache by saying deresh plinty of anything elshe in it."

Having delivered himself of this oration, Dermot hastily wiped the back of his hand across his mouth, and preceded us up the creaking round-about, with such an irresistibly ludicrous strut, as much as to say, "you see I know how to do it;" that we all burst out laughing, having given our superfluous drapery to the attendant nymph, as Lady Laura would have called her, to place in the conservatory. Dermot flung open the opposite door, and roared out in the voice of a stentor:

"Sur George and de leedies."

And a minute after, as soon as he had given sufficient time for these sonorous sounds to boom through the rooms, not exactly knowing the aides-de-camp names, he again bellowed out:

"And de two sojer officers in feaders!"

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Lord Frederick, laying both his hands upon Dapperwit's shoulders, in a perfect convulsion of laughter, as they both retreated into the passage; "I cannot go any farther; I feel that the first shot has killed me; I bequeath you my sword, you may find it useful in cutting out the parrot's tongue, and my *eau de Cologne*, which will

be equally so in speaking to its mistress. Let my epitaph be :

‘ Here lies a sojer officer,
Killed by a tay boy, and coffee, sir,’

for already I perceive the aroma of the chicory and horse beans: don’t you, my dear fellow?”

As soon as they had had their laugh out, and laid several bets as to which of them would have the face to talk the most bombast to Lady Laura, they joined the procession, and entered the room. To describe the heterogeneous assemblage there collected, would be utterly impossible; but as they were chiefly composed of what Dapperwit called system-mongers, it may be sufficient to observe, that there was not that marked distinction existing between the hue of the gentlemen’s linen, and that of their coats, which is generally supposed to be the characteristic of the line of demarcation between black and white; while nearly all the ladies looked as if they had been born before combs and brushes were invented: and when in point of *coiffures* there had only been birds’-nests and hay-stacks to set the fashions. Lady Laura advanced in all her dignity to meet us; while her sponso, who was as broad as she was long, and looked as Lady Laura should have wished to look, but never had, his whole appearance (with this little exception) was that of an amateur brigand: I say an amateur one, for notwithstanding his fierce display of beard and

whisker, and the innumerable curb-chains and rings he wore, yet he looked too pale and flabby for a real one; he was so much in the habit of laughing at, and playing off, his wife, that he had contracted a curious species of optical gymnastics in looking two different ways at once, and winking both eyes at the same time, which might be considered the germ of the electric telegraph of the present day.

“This is indeed kind,” said Lady Laura, taking my uncle’s hand, and retaining it within both her talons, which he bore like a hero, as he *was*, even to his valet-de-chambre! “I must introduce you, my dear Sir George,” continued she, “to a friend of mine, who, I have no doubt, will be one of the greatest political characters of the day, the celebrated Put-me-in-your-place Eitherside: wonderful man! my dear Sir George: says everything is wrong.”

“Without being a Solomon, I am rather of his way of thinking,” replied my uncle, calmly.

“I know,” resumed Lady Laura, “that your views are not quite so enlightened as his; he thinks that, politically speaking, the people ought to rule, and not be ruled.”

“No, I confess I don’t go quite so far, my dear Lady Laura, I only think with Vicessimus Knox, that ‘the people should be at liberty to study politics, to read pamphlets, and to debate, if they choose, in debating societies.’ The more they know of a good constitution, and a good administration, the better

they will behave. Ministers need not hire newspapers, or employ spies. Let them build their confidence in truth and justice, and the enlightened people will constitute its firmest buttress. Let it never be said that the people have nothing to do with politics, lest it should be inferred that such politics have no regard to the people."

"Oh, sure you don't think that they have?" said this ultra-liberal lady.

My uncle affected not to hear this question, for where there is not one grain of common sense, a whole bushel of reason would be only wasted. Strange, that in this universal philanthropy, the rats, cock-roaches, and short-commons of the home department, never once darted across her mind; but I suppose, like Erasmus, who in writing to the Pope to excuse himself for not observing any of the fasts of the Church, said "his soul was truly Catholic, but unfortunately his stomach was Lutheran," Lady Laura's theories were truly liberal, only unfortunately her practice was rather narrow and tyrannical, an anomaly that does sometimes occur, even in the best regulated philanthropists.

Having consigned my unfortunate uncle to the tender mercies of the patriotic Mr. Put-me-in-your-place Eitherside, Lady Laura turned blandly round to Captain Dapperwit, and as Dermot (assisted by one of the soldiers in plain clothes from Fort Goliah), was now handing a nankeen-looking fluid in coffee-cups,

and some red-herring splinters between brown bread and butter, which Lady Laura called Sardine sandwiches, and actually had the barbarity to press people to accompany by a sort of bottled cholera, that she denominated champagne, she now said to that young martyr in scarlet-cloth and silver-lace :

“ Oh, Captain Dapperwit, won’t you take a glass of champagne ? ”

“ Champagne, indeed,” growled an old gentleman, in black shorts and white stockings, with a very large pale conglomerated sort of face, with no other outline but that of a snout, relieved by a black bruised-looking spot at the tip of his nose like an incipient truffle, in short, his whole appearance was that of a hippopotamus doing penance in a white mask. He was a dissenting minister, and had built one or two chapels of ease ; nevertheless, the scandalous chronicle asserted that in his own house, as well as in those fanes, the mice had taken vows of poverty ; and doubtless, it was this similarity of tastes that assimilated him with Lady Laura, as she was well known to be a great propagator of that peculiar species of lame mice, which on account of this infirmity are compelled to go upon crutches. “ Champagne, indeed,” growled this personage ; “ where are the grapes, Ma’am ? gooseberries you mean, which you are trying to make fools of by calling them champagne ; ” for though this speaker’s hospitality seldom extended beyond bread or water, yet he honestly called them by those names.

“ Oh, fie,” screamed the parrot.

“ Oh, fie, Mr. Mundungus,” said Lady Laura; “ you see even Philomella is shocked at you for saying such things ; and though I happen to like what you call gooseberry-wine, it is quite as dear as the other.”

“ Fudge, ma’am,” from the Reverend Noah Mundungus, while Lord Frederick *sotto voce’d* to his fellow-sufferer ; “ we are likely to pay much more dearly for it.”

“ I’m afraid you don’t like brown bread, Lord Frederick,” said the hostess, “ but you know it is the orthodox thing with sardines.”

“ The greatest happiness of the greatest numbers,” croaked the jackdaw hopping on the tray, which he nearly upset ; but at the same time, humanely flying off with the last piece of mummied red-herring left upon the plate, which otherwise poor Lord Frederick might have been worried into taking.

“ Not like brown bread !” cried Lord Frederick, now nerving himself desperately for the fray, and rushing into the thick of it, for fear Dapperwit would get the start of him, on account of their impending bets to fool Lady Laura to the top of her bent. “ Not like brown bread, my dear Madam ! I adore it. It always reminds me of Vacluse, and you of Petrarch, as well as Laura. You remember his celebrated letter, in which he compares his dwelling to those of Fabricius and Cato—and so may you yours ; and in which he also says—just as you may, and no doubt do

say: 'Here I war against my passions: I see only the sky, the water, and the rocks; nor gold,' (for gilding is not gold), 'nor precious stones, nor purple, nor ivory. The only female I see is a black servant, and she as parched and burnt as the deserts of Lybia. I hear only the asses bray, or the bleating sheep, the chirping birds, or murmuring waters. Having no one to converse with, I am silent from morning till night; the people solely occupied in the vineyards, or in spreading their nets,' (you see how applicable this is to the sailors of the men-of-war, beneath your windows, my dear Madam.) 'I know nothing of conversation, or society; I content myself frequently with the brown bread my footman eats.' Here, my dear Madam, is a most singular and striking instance of how the tastes and habits of great geniuses of all ages assimilate. Petrarch often ate the bread of his footman, and you, just five hundred and eleven years after, are addicted to precisely the same practices. Another strange coincidence is your *locale*, for near Vaucluse, the small town of Cavaillon is washed by the Durance; and here we are also in durance; and I need scarcely remind so classical and profound a scholar as doubtlessly Lady Laura O'Shindy is, that Titus Livius says it was the most difficult of all rivers to traverse."

"Oh! of course," pursing up her mouth, and fanning herself, "one knows all these things, only one forgets them."

"Do be quiet," groaned Dapperwit, nudging Lord Frederick, "or you'll kill me."

Here a deputation of Cookes and Abrahams came to beg for a song from Lady Laura, or at least an air on the harp (for Lady Laura was unmerciful enough to do both).

"Pray do, my dear Lady Laura," said Miss Leah Abraham; and in the energy of her entreaties, a large cabbage-rose fell from her bosom, which Captain O'Shindy hastened to pick up, and gallantly wished to retain, and transfer to his own botton-hole, but which the young lady insisted upon having returned to her, and replacing in her bosom; while the Captain executed coruscations of winks that were perfectly phosphoric.

"What shall it be?" simpered Lady Laura.

"It ought to be, 'Just like Love is yonder Rose,'" said Lord Frederick, pointing to the reinstated flower.

"Nay," whispered Dapperwit, "just like Lazarus, you mean, since it is again in Abraham's bosom."

No sooner had Lady Laura traversed the room, and placed herself at the harp, where from her exaggeratedly masculine features, she looked exceedingly like a Sternhold and Hopkins's Edition of "King David," an old gentleman in a bag wig (a great mathematician) was hastening to pay his compliments to her before the song began, when unfortunately his head touched the ceiling, and he set the stuffed Cupid swinging, who, out of revenge, kicked

off his wig, which however seemed to know when it was well off, and therefore quietly settled upon a branch of the paper ivy.

“What a pity!” said the eldest Miss Cooke (commonly called the Man-Cooke, who had no toleration for the freaks of Cupid, “what a pity that Lady Laura has not a fixed lamp to this very low room.”

“D—d stingy old dust,” broke in the parrot, while the lady so vituperated, burst into a tremulous squeak of—

“Just like love is yonder rose.”

While Captain Dapperwit drew forth his tablets in a corner, and *improviséd* a very close parody beginning—

“Just like beet-root is yonder nose,”

As Lady Laura announced in another wirey twitter, that

“In the midst of briars it blows.”

Lord Frederick whispered to his accomplice, who had nearly pulled him down upon one of the blue satin chairs, wreathed with roses and thorns:

“D—n it, Dapperwit, take care what you are about, or I shall do the same.”

As soon as the song and the *obligato* plaudits were finished, Lady Laura, with even more than

her usual dignity, and mysterious importance, sailed up to me, and said :

“Miriam, my dear, I wish to speak to you in the conservatory.”

I of course followed, and there being no curtain before the four panes of green glass above the door, Lady Laura, after locking it, seized a shawl, and securing it by means of pins, shut out any prying glances that might want to obtrude themselves from without. I began to feel alarmed, when Lady Laura bridling exceedingly, and her nose getting redder and redder, drew a paper from her pocket, and opened the session by saying with her mouth so pursed up that really the sounds could scarcely find room to issue from it :

“Ahem—ahem ! I hope I need scarcely tell you, my dear Miriam, that I, as a married woman, would not even think of reading love verses, if I received them.”

And to do Lady Laura justice, she was the very quintessence of personal propriety ; for, as a French author has truly observed, “For women, good sense is a guard of honour ; and ugliness a body-guard. This latter never sleeps.”* And by this sleepless guardian had Lady Laura always been protected, even when the Captain had been bivouacking in

* “Pour les femmes la sagesse est une garde d’honneur, et la laideur une garde de corps ; cette dernière ne s’endort jamais.”

Spain. *Mais, en revanche.* She had a vanity which never slept either; and therefore she laboured under a curious illusion, that all sorts of anonymous ovations to her transcendant talents were continually going on in the world, though out of respect to her they were with difficulty suppressing themselves only to explode a century hence in posthumous fame, when the male portion of the creation at least might do homage, and adore without fear of tarnishing her Siberian frigidity with the breath of scandal.

“This, then, my dear Miriam,” continued she, unfolding the paper, and placing it in my hand, “is merely a tribute to my *lit’ry* reputation. A man who was pretending to ask a fisherman the price of some turbot he was landing on the quay this morning dropped it at my feet, for of course he dared not give it me openly. I understand French and Italian perfectly to read and to speak, only I’m too lazy to speak them; but I don’t understand French and Italian poetry quite so well; so I want you to read and translate these verses for me.”

The scrawl upon the paper seemed strangely familiar to me, and even the paper itself wore the face of an old acquaintance, for it was a peculiar sort of glazed Italian paper, with little bouquets of flowers all over it, and sure enough when I began to read it, the complimentary verses from which poor Lady Laura expected so much delight, turned out to be neither more nor less than a bill of fare of Vatel’s.

So he was the timid adorer who pretended to bargain with the fisherman, and had dropped his trembling homage at her feet, which, nevertheless, very unsentimentally and materially ran as follows :

PREMIER SERVICE.

Potage printannière.

Soupe à la Reine.

HORS-D'ŒUVRE.

Petits pâtés à la Béchamelle.

Vol-au-vent d'Homard.

RELEVÉS.

Turbot, Sauce Hollandaise.

Saumon à la Chambord.

Filet de Bœuf à la Godart.

ENTRÉES.

Croutades truffées à la Milanaise.

Côtelettes à la Toulouse.

Poulets à la Ravigotte.

Ros-bif (!) Salade-Russe.

SECOND SERVICE.

Chaud-froid de Perdreaux.

Aspic de foies gras.

Pudding à la Chipolata.

Punch à la Romaine en Surprise.

Puits d'Amour à la Laura,
 (dites à l'Italienne.)
 Crème à la Vanille.
 Macédoine de Fruits.
 Chapon aux Cressons.
 Alouettes au beurre de Montpellier.
 Artichaux à la Barigoule.
 Jambon de Westphalie,
 au bain de vin de Champagne.

DESSERT.

Glaces.
 Ananas.
 Raisins.
 Pêches.
 Brugnons.
 Gâteau Vénitien.
 Reines Claudes à l'eau de vie.
 Bavaroise au Chocolat.
 Pièces montées.
 Bonbons à devises.

——— V. (Chef.)

“ Well, but you should’nt laugh, for that is very pert in a young person,” said Lady Laura ; “ and you see there’s my name,” added she, pointing out the ‘ Puits d’amour à la Laura,’ and I want to know what he says of me. It would be very impertinent to call me by my *Crissen* name (for so Lady Laura pronounced Christian name), only its always admissible in poetry, especially as O’Shindy is not a poetical name.”

“ They are not verses,” said I, now with more difficulty than ever restraining my laughter.

“Not verses! then if it’s prose, it’s written in the oldest way I ever saw. But, at all events, tell me what he says, and which of my works he admires the most; for I see the word *hore-dooover*, which I suppose is only another word for *cheff-dooover*.”

“Why, yes, I believe so,” said I, now fairly bursting; “for Vatel considers all his *hors-d’œuvre chefs-d’œuvre*.”

“And who is Vatel? Is he a poet, or a prose writer?” asked Lady Laura, “for I’m not so well acquainted with these modern French authors that have sprung up since the Revolution—so tell me which he is, Miriam.”

“Neither,” I replied. “He is only my Uncle Paulett’s cook, and this is one of his bills of fare, which I suppose he dropped when he was ordering the fish from the boats this morning.”

“Oh! the ojus, impertinent cretchur! to *dar* to drop his colyums (*Anglice*, columns) of cookery at my feet! Come, child, let us go back to the drawing-room; and be sure that you don’t say anything about this ojus bill of fare, for Captain O’Shindy is so dreadfully jealous!” said Lady Laura, casting down her eyes all over her nose, which really did blush for her folly; “and having been in the commissariat, and therefore understanding all about provisions, he might suspect some foul play, and see more in this paper than meets the eye.”

On returning to the drawing-room, to my great

delight I found Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, whom Lady Laura, in the overflowings of her benevolent condescension, had invited to this her last charming *gala*, and who was searching with all her might for a few grains of gold amid the abundant dross being dealt out by a Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck, who had written a ponderous book as heavy as himself, upon the distribution of wealth, which, however, had neither extinguished Adam Smith, nor expelled the old Adam from the rotten core of society. In appearance, Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck, the great political economist of Lady Laura's literary and scientific system, round which he revolved like a bat round a coal-hole, much resembled a woodcock perched upon a hop-pole, except that woodcocks upon hop-poles don't dye their plumage, as this gentleman did, the few straggling and straight hairs that adhered to his poll, like one of those rare instances of faithful and pertinacious attachment one sometimes sees evinced by the few-and-far-between bristles of an old hair-broom.

But, few as Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck's capillary adornments were, their variety of hue and colour was endless; and when he stood between two lights, their refractions were perfectly prismatic. He wore them rushing out straight, like a whirlwind, at each temple, and standing on end, bolt upright, like a panic, in the centre, while behind, they were as flat as his own conversation. And thou wert the cause of this rainbow, Aunt Marley! His forehead was low and wrinkled;

his eyebrows were bushy and projecting; while his sunken and purblind-looking eyes, kept up such a continual blinking, that it was an utter impossibility to distinguish their colour; but that of his complexion was like light Russian leather. His nose was about the length of a woodcock's beak, and darted straight out from his face, as if it had been shot from within; his upper lip was straight, and long in proportion, and would have made an admirable gutter for the centre of a continental street, or spout for the side of a Roman house; his teeth were long, straggling, and uneven, like tombstones in a country churchyard; his under lip projected like the spout of a butter-boat, and his chin was small and retreating.

His linen was curiously coarse, and the rusty *corbeau* cloth, that composed his long-tailed, short-waisted, and much-wrinkled coat, the same; though the latter was evidently new on for the present great occasion, as the rustling of the stiff glazed calico lining only too loudly proclaimed. He was very narrow-chested, and stooped much, which gave his back somewhat of an ungraceful roundness; his waistcoats were invariably too short, which, though he was as thin as asparagus run to seed, gave him a *faux air* of a paunch, the more especially as, though a vegetarian who never touched animal food, yet, unlike Pythagoras, he was no respecter of beans; and consequently often indulged in them. His trousers, which in winter were of a piece with his coat, but in summer of that peculiar sort of die-away nankeen,

which looks "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," no doubt reminiscences of all the bubbles of life that have burst around it in the shape of soap-suds and the continual hot water it has been kept in; these trousers, unfettered by the despotism of straps, were very wide at the ancles, and always

"Floating free as mountain breezes."

Mr. Pinchbeck's ancles were curiously slight, and his feet cased in very thick-soled, unpolished leather shoes, with tremendous bows and ends of cotton-tape ties, as curiously large, displaying like a guinea-fowl above them his speckled black-and-white worsted stockings; such, with the sleeves of his coat invariably too short, thus making his long, skinny, claw-like hands appear still longer, was Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck's unchanging costume; being exceedingly near-sighted, he wore glasses, attached to a round piece of black-worsted cord, like that used for the pulleys of window-blinds, and strange to say, though he had written so much upon the distribution of wealth, not a single grain of either gold or silver seemed to be patronized by him, for his eye-glasses even, were set in block-tin, which considerably added to the grotesqueness and ourang-outangishness of his appearance; and as he was in the habit of taking pulmonic lozenges (as well as writing pulmonic essays), some young wags had sent him a large oval block-tin *bonbonnière*, not unlike a

metallic warm plaster, and as the city of Cork had the honour of claiming this great political economist as her son, they had the following couplet inscribed round it, being a parody on Dryden's

“Charronæen Plutarch, to thy deathless praise,
Doth martial Rome this grateful tribute raise !”

“Corkonian Pinchbeck, to humour thy queer ways,
Doth grateful Tin this humble tribute raise !”

The two distinguishing traits of the great Thesmo-thete's conversation were, that holding up the two fore-fingers of his right hand levelled like a pistol at the face of the person he was addressing, he always prefaced every fresh sentence with the extraordinary, and one would think, superfluous interrogation of “Do you see me now ?” while at the same time his discourse was so confused with entangled parenthesis, that it was impossible ever to disentangle it, or get back to the original point from whence he had started ; for instance, it was a common thing with him to commence with a tirade against one of Lord Castlereagh's speeches, and from thence to diverge into a badly-aired flannel-waistcoat, which brought on a fit of illness that required change of air ; till finally he lost his way about the streets of Canton, leaving Lord Castlereagh all this time to “*stand prostrate*” at the feet of any nation he pleased, which that statesman had so eloquently declared he would never see England do.

Luckily, however, Mr. Thesmothete Pinchbeck, also, had a trick of haranguing with his eyes tightly shut, so that sometimes at the end of an hour, or an hour and a half, when charmed with the deferential silence with which he had been listened to, suddenly opening his eyes, to obtain ocular demonstration of the effect he had produced, he had the great, if not exactly pleasing surprise of finding that he had not a single auditor left, and that all this time he had not even been casting pearls before swine, but worse still, wasting his wisdom on the winds. Of all his victims, poor Dr. O'Donnell was the one who suffered the most from him, because he took him *au grand sérieux*, which one should never do a bore, but always make of them that amusement which they are in themselves incapable of contributing to society; in short, one should play the bee and not the spider to them, that is, divide the arduous task with nature, as in the case of Lord Brougham's nose, which she has made ridiculous and ungainly, but from which all the world, nevertheless, derive a constant and unflagging source of amusement and delight, which is more than they are likely to do from his other absurdities.

But instead of pursuing this wise course of self-preservation, poor Dr. O'Donnell, when compelled to listen to the great Thesmothete, by my Aunt Marley or any of the reigning powers, used to sit groaning and turning up his eyes, or else feeling Pinchbeck's pulse, and muttering in an audible aside, which, with his

north of Ireland Scottish brogue, was irresistibly ludicrous.

“Augh, poor divil, he’s gitting worse, and worse.”

“Augh, what on earth are his relations about, or has he none? that for the credit of the famly they don’t club together to provide him with a decent retreat in some private asylum, where he’d be humanely treated, and given four good bare walls to talk to, that he couldn’t injure, and that would listen as long as he liked.”

When we returned to the drawing-room, Mr. Pinchbeck being in possession of the platform, as many as it could contain, had taken refuge in the back-room, while the rest had rushed to the balcony, preferring even tar to twaddle; so that poor Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, with the bore-proof good breeding of her country, was the only martyr who had remained at the stake, with the exception of Dr. O’Donnell, who said he staid professionally, as it was not right to trust a sane person alone with a madman. While Pinchbeck on his side, with a ragged sort of splinter-of-block-tin-gallantry, which he had endeavoured to infuse into his bearing, ever since he had fallen a victim to the personal attractions and philosophical views of my Aunt Marley, and being unable to die himself, to prove the extent of his devotion, had adopted the less desperate *mezzo termine* of dyeing his hair. Pinchbeck on his side, I say, who possessed, in a strong degree, that Anglo fallacy, that the French were a frivolous people,

instead of which they happen to be *the* most profound people in the world, as they have fused in the subtle crucible of their wide intelligence, and coined for a general circulating medium in their initiative mint, the rough and unuseable ore of German metaphysics; thus creating a floating capital of intellectual wealth, equally adapted to the inexhaustible demands of the millionaire thinker, or the small current barter of conventionalities, which constitute the daily exigencies of society's superficial wants.

But let this pass; Pinchbeck was one of those ancient Britons, who lost in the fog of his own profundity, took the frivolity of the French, nationally and individually, for granted; so that just as I returned, he was actually floundering into an attempt to talk toilet to Mademoiselle de Guilleragues; but, as I suppose, he thought that costume, like charity, should begin at home, he had selected his own coat for the experiment.

"Do you see me now?" he commenced, as Dr. O'Donnell, in a stage whisper, turning up his eyes, and joining his hands as if in prayer, groaned, as he turned his head on one side:

"Augh! indeed, for our sins, in these d——d parties of O'Shindy's ridiculous wife, one seldom sees anything else."

"Do you see me now? though I actually went to the expense of a new coat to come here to-day; that fellow of a tailor, I do believe, has made it crooked."

“Augh!” again groaned the Doctor, suddenly seizing Pinchbeck’s wrist, and feeling his pulse, which was conveniently bare for the operation; “as long as the waistcoat could be but straight, that’s all you require, my dear fellow.”

“Do you see me now? it’s actually higher on one side than the other.”

“The elevating principle should always be maintained,” chimed in the jackdaw.

“Oh, fie!” screamed the parrot, as Pinchbeck, in his twitchings and pullings, made a false grasp, and missing his aim, suddenly separated his waistcoat from his trousers, as completely as Harry the Eighth separated the Anglican church from that of Rome, and, by this means, left his waist apparently doing penance in a white sheet.

Poor Pinchbeck, thus put to his shifts, gave up dress as an unlucky topic; while Mademoiselle de Guilleragues turned away to hide the laughter she could no longer suppress, but infinitely more amused at the Doctor’s lachrymose gravity, and the expression of misery and despair in his face, than even at the great Thesmothete’s disasters. The latter, however, now determined to make a total change, leaped from coats to petticoats, and asked her if when in France, she had been personally acquainted with Madame de Jongly? as he called Madame de Genlis.

“No, I was not,” replied Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, with a sigh; “for when I was with the poor

dear Princesse de Lamballe, her Majesty, Marie Antoinette, would never receive Madame de Genlis; ‘Je ne souffrirai pas, disait-elle, que Madame de Genlis me soit présentée; d’ailleurs je n’aime pas les beaux esprits qui font de la morale écrite, et de l’immoralité en action;’* and as I am also of her Majesty’s way of thinking, I never sought Madame de Genlis’s acquaintance.”

Here Captain Dapperwit came sauntering into the room, with his pocket-handkerchief on active service, muttering, as he tottered in from the balcony: “Who can touch pitch without being defiled!” and then proceeded to hover round Pinchbeck, looking leisurely and carefully over him from head to foot, and from foot to head.

“Are you looking for anything?” said I, also obliged to retreat behind the great Thesmothete, for fear he should see me laughing.

“Yes,” said Dapperwit; “I am looking for the label. All the animals at Exeter Change and the Tower are labelled, and very properly; for unless one was a Linnæus, a Cuvier, or a Buffon, how the deuce is one to know all the different names of the infinite varity of the baboon genus?”

“I remember,” said Mademoiselle, speaking in

* “I will not allow Madame de Genlis to be presented to me; for, indeed, I do not like your clever people who write morally, while their actions are immoral.” In plain English, poor Marie Antoinette had a just contempt for mere fine sentiment-mongers.

French, that Pinchbeck might not know that he himself formed the interesting topic of conversation, "that the year before the revolution broke out, all Paris was taken in by a hoax played off upon the credulity of the good Parisians; it was placarded all over the town, that on the Boulevard du Temple was to be seen a most extraordinary *lusus naturæ*, the offspring of a carp and a rabbit. All the world flocked to see it, but all the world were invariably told, that they had arrived at a *mal-à-propos* moment, for that the interesting progeny happened just then to have been sent to pay one or two visits, in the Faubourg St. Germain, to a brace of dowager duchesses, and an invalid *jeune comtesse*, who could not come and pay their respects to it; but the father and mother were both at home, if the visitors liked to see them; as both the rabbit and the carp, being of a social disposition, received all day long. Now, I really think," continued Mademoiselle, laughing, "that *ce brave homme*," looking slyly at Pinchbeck, "must have had an ourang-outang for his papa, and a woodcock* for his mamma; surtout, puisque les races se féminisent."

"Not the least doubt of it," laughed Dapperwit; "the mother is a true bill, and as for the father, thereby hangs, or at least hung, a tail; for I should think Pinchbeck *père* must be defunct long ago. Oh!

* A *bécasse*, or woodcock, in French, means also a silly woman—as we say, a goose.

murder!" cried he, suddenly backing almost into the wall, as if precipitately escaping from imminent danger; "here comes the tay boy and the centurian again; really, Doctor, you ought to remonstrate with Lady Laura for distributing your prescriptions gratis!"

"I beg, Captain Dapperwit," said the poor Doctor, as he turned with a groan from Pinchbeck to a cursory survey of the wonderful contents of the two salvers, "that you won't libel my salutary prescriptions; for I never administer poison, but in an orthodox form."

"Ah! I see how it is," said the other, laughing; "you play into each other's hands. Lady Laura manufactures maladies for you to cure."

"That's it," said Dr. O'Donnell, laughing, "only," added he, glancing at Pinchbeck, "it is taking an unfair advantage of me to smuggle in incurables."

"Do you see me now?" said Pinchbeck, seizing a glass of foaming gooseberry, and altogether launching into a most anacreontic and profligate sort of *laissez aller*, "there is nothing like women and wine."

"Fair play," cried Dapperwit; "I protest, Mr. Pinchbeck, against your monopolising both; it is contrary to all the rules of the distribution of wealth."

"Do you see me now?" blinked Pinchbeck, "a bird in the hand."

"You mean," interrupted Dapperwit, "a glass in the hand is worth all the nymphs in my eye, including the fair Elizabeth Martin, eh, Mr. Pinchbeck."

"Do you see me now? I'm not up to the pranks of

you young chaps, but will you pledge the lady of your love?" and Pinchbeck tendered another glass of the raging gooseberry (as Dr. O'Donnell used to call it), to Dapperwit, which, however, eventually found its way down Pinchbeck's own throat.

"Heaven and all the saints forbid!" cried the aide-de-camp, with a look of pious horror as he started back. "I hope my principles are too firmly fixed for me ever to attempt to commit suicide."

"Perhaps this grape-shot is more in your way," said Dr. O'Donnell, pointing to some little small dusty black grapes with their sear and yellow leaves appended to them, to show that they had once actually been on a vine, which vine grew outside the conservatory-window, and having the full benefit, not only of the morning sun and dust, but also of all the smoke rising from the fires used for melting pitch along the quay, was fairly worried into putting forth its fruit two months sooner than any other vine; but like all infant prodigies, these grapes never grew into anything great afterwards, except in Lady Laura's mouth, when she talked of the grapes of her conservatory being the most forward in the island.

"Shall I give you some?" added the Doctor.

"No, I thank you, my dear Doctor," said Dapperwit, turning them over with the end of his scabbard, "I never take my wine in pills."

While Dr. O'Donnell was still laughing at this

sally, and Pinchbeck had at the expiration of five minutes, actually discovered all by himself, and totally unassisted, that wine-pills were a very good name for grapes, Lady Laura advanced, and said in a very mysterious and solemn manner to Captain Dapperwit, "that she wished to speak to him upon a matter of importance; but as it shall never be said that I was seen *tête-à-tête* with any man but Captain O'Shindy, Miriam, my dear, come with us," said she.

I began to wonder if she was going to take another opinion upon the bill of fare, while Dapperwit stammered out "te—te; thank you, my dear Lady Laura, for there is safety in numbers;" and, at the same time, he slyly drew his sword, and carried it behind him in the most ludicrous manner possible, as grasping my wrist he followed Lady Laura, making his hand shake and his teeth chatter, as if he had the ague, or was half-dead with fear, which sent me off into such convulsions of laughter, that Lady Laura was obliged to turn round and inform me that:

"Nothing made a young person appear so like an idiot, as those extraordinary sort of laughs without the slightest provocation to mirth, in which I was always indulging."

"Very true, my dear Madam," said Dapperwit, solemnly, "in this, as in all else, you evince your profound penetration. I can only suppose, Miss Miriam, that you are laughing at me, which, allow

me to tell you, is extremely ill-bred; for, however I may ambition the smiles of your sex, not being Mr. Pinchbeck, I feel I am not entitled to the laughter."

"Pinchbeck is indeed a most superior man," said Lady Laura; "but though," added she, screwing up her mouth into what she thought a most irresistible and encouraging smile, which she stuck into the very centre of the poor aide-de-camp's eyes, "you may not equal him in his own particular line, yet don't despair, perhaps there may be ladies willing to smile upon you, too."

Dapperwit now began to look seriously and unaffectedly alarmed; while Lady Laura preceding us into the conservatory, again locked and curtained the door.

"Miriam, my dear," said she, "you can stand in that corner with the carpet-broom, and you need not listen to what we are saying."

This strange preliminary speech, Lady Laura thought the quintessence of diplomatic astuteness, for she was never satisfied with painting her transparencies in the most glaring colours, till she had also set a light behind them to show how cunningly all the points were devised. Had she been a diplomat, and compelled to write in cypher, she would have written long explanations of each hieroglyphic, stating, that she had resorted to enigmas, in case the despatch should fall into the enemy's hands, but enclosed the key for the benefit of her correspondent; in

short, she was full of art about everything, but all her arts, as the French say, to express clumsy deceptions, were *cousu de fil blanc*, (sewn with white thread); the Spartans were quite right to punish such bunglers; fraud is one sin, but detected fraud is a double sin, and holds the same degraded rank in the moral scale that vulgarity does in the social; for vulgarity has been happily defined as unsuccessful affectation, and fashion as successful affectation. No sooner had Lady Laura made this speech, than Dapperwit, while she was still more hermetically sealing us by closing the conservatory-window, said to me:

“My dear Miss Miriam, you will bear witness that I was entrapped to my fate, and that I died bravely, sword in hand!”

Lady Laura had told me not to listen, but she had not forbidden me to hear, when she left me enacting the part of groom to the witches’-steed, *alias*, standing up in the corner by the broomstick in the conservatory; accordingly, I am enabled to put the reader in possession of the following edifying conversation between her and Captain Dapperwit.

“A-hem! you are aware, Captain Dapperwit, that custom—that is, a barbarous state of civilization—has condemned women to the painful, and sometimes impossible task of concealing their sentiments within their own *boosums*; but I,”—and here she cast down her eyes, and hesitated; while Dapperwit looked

actually rabid, as he hastily glanced from the door to the window, and saw both closed; "but I," continued Lady Laura, "think that friendship may, without impropriety, surmount this barrier; and I cannot think so ill of you, notwithstanding that you belong to the blood-thirsty profession of *legal butchers*," she emphasised the words, "as to suppose that you would wantonly tamper with the sensibilities of the female heart, by affecting a tender passion that you did not feel; and in vain I have tried to shut my eyes; I could not but perceive, how compromising your attentions, nay more, your every look has been."

"Nonsense!" cried Dapperwit, "now springing to the door like a tiger at bay; "I am willing, this very moment, to run Captain O'Shindy through the body, or blow his brains out, if he has any, to convince you and him, that I never even looked at you, when I could possibly avoid it."

"Me!" interposed Lady Laura; "oh, no—no man has ever presumed to bestow illegal glances upon me since I have been another's. I was not alluding to myself, perfectly assured, that whatever the internal struggle of your feelings might be, you would never dare to express them."

All the time most energetically re-assuring Lady Laura upon this point, Dapperwit got into such a dreadful fit of laughter, at the idea of the ridiculous mistake Lady Laura's harangue had led him into, that he was some seconds before he could say :

“And may I take the liberty of inquiring to whom you *do* allude?”

“I would know,” said Lady Laura, folding her arms, giving her mouth an additional screw, and infusing a little more saltpetre into her face, so as to bring her whole bearing a few degrees further below freezing-point, “what your intentions are towards my sweet young friend, Miss Leah Abraham?”

“My intentions!” gasped Dapperwit; “I have none—none, upon my honour. Lady Laura, pray assure her that I never even intend to ask her to dance again, if that will satisfy her and you.”

“No, Captain Dapperwit, it will not. I was alluding to nearer and dearer ties. Do you intend to propose for her, for I know she intends to accept you, if you do?”

“She is very kind—too kind, in fact,” said Dapperwit; “but unfortunately those nearer and dearer ties, as you justly call them, my dear Madam, are much *too dear* for a poor devil like me to indulge in; as unfortunately, notwithstanding Mr. Pinchbeck’s immortal work upon the distribution of wealth, I have only my pay to live on.”

“Well,” said Lady Laura, with one of those ineffably placid smiles, which she always assumed when she sapiently (as was her wont) smoothed a difficulty by an impossibility, “Leah has nothing either; so she is not mercenary; and surely it is better to live on

your pay than not to pay for what you live on, as so many do."

"Ah! but the reason so many do the latter, my dear Lady Laura, is, that it is a deuced deal easier to do than the former; and I don't live on my pay, for I couldn't do it—it merely finds me in claret and pipe-clay, when I'm obliged to dine at the mess, and in perfumes and note-paper, when I'm on the staff; and you, who know everything, my dear Lady Laura, must be aware, that all statistics have gone to prove, that pap-boats, in the long run, are infinitely more onerous than pipe-clay; and that marriage is too expensive a mess for any man under a field-officer to get into. Besides, though the little Dapperwits might be fortunate enough, thanks to your kind exertions, to be able to boast of having 'Abraham to their mother,' yet not having him to their father, I really don't know how they would get on: therefore, though greatly flattered by your fair friend's having given me the refusal of her hand, I cannot repay the obligation by affording her an opportunity of accepting mine."

The impertinent fatuity of this speech, all-glaringly assumed as it was, conveyed even to Lady Laura's obtuseness some faint idea of how she had compromised and degraded her friend—all in intending to render her an essential service.

"Pray, don't go and suppose," said she, bridling and reddening, and now trying to get as clumsily out of the scrape as she had got coarsely into it; "don't

for the world imagine that Leah, the most modest and retiring of human beings, knows anything, or has the least suspicion that I intended to speak to you on this subject."

"Why, I thought," interrupted Dapperwit, enjoying the scrape Lady Laura had got herself into too much to let her off so easily, "that I had understood your ladyship especially to state, that it was Miss Leah Abraham's obliging determination to accept me, when I proposed for her."

"Oh, dear! how you take one up, and put one down, just like a lawyer: I merely meant that I was sure—that is, that I thought—Leah would not refuse you, if you asked her to marry you; and I really thought you had some regard for her."

"I have so much," said the young man, assuming quite a different look and manner, "that I am most truly grieved that I should (though unintentionally) have been the means of Miss Abraham's name being made so unpardonably free with. I can only hope, Lady Laura, that you will never let it get to her ears, and I give you my solemn word of honour, as a gentleman, that I will take care it never gets to anybody else's; and I am sure, Miss Miriam, you will also give me your word never to repeat what you have just heard, which was only a jest of Lady Laura's, a very bad one, I grant, as all practical jokes are. You are now growing up yourself, and in a very few years more you will understand that a woman's name is of

too delicate a texture (or at least should be so) to be discussed as a matter of barter, or sale, like any common merchandise; so now I beg of you to do by Miss Abraham as you would that others should do by you; that is, never injure or degrade her by an incautious word: for, for one injury that malice prepense, or cruelty inflicts in this world, carelessness hurls twenty."

I promised faithfully, and liked Captain Dapperwit from that day, though he never fulfilled his original intention of becoming my uncle. Lady Laura, however, who like all fools was too vain of her cleverness, notwithstanding the flagrant blunders it was always making, and the signal disasters it was ever entailing, to rest till she had trumpeted her wonderful efforts to get her friend married; for did she only open or shut a door in behalf of another, she expected to have an annuity of thanks settled upon her, the dividend payable every three minutes in the day. So, accordingly, she lost no time in seeking poor Miss Abraham, and impressing upon her the urgent arguments she had used to persuade Captain Dapperwit to make her an offer; and that he would have done so, but that he had not money enough to marry.

The result of this flattering communication was, that the poor girl, her pride stung to the quick, and her sense of delicacy outraged, went into violent hysterics, which at all events had the good effect of breaking up the party, as my Aunt Marley conveyed

her home, and I went in the carriage with my uncle, who desired the coachman to cross the bridge, and return home by the other side of the river. Every one had now left the Palazzo Vascello, even to its master, who had occasion to personally give some orders to a pretty little French milliner, who lived two or three streets off, touching the hemming of some pocket-handkerchiefs ; so that Lady Laura, Mr. Pinchbeck, and Philomella, alone lingered in the balcony, inhaling apparently with infinite complacency the mosaic of atrocious odours wafted up from the quay, which Lady Laura called the salubrious breezes from the river.

Just as we were opposite to her window, on the other side of the bank, a tremendous explosion took place, loud as the blasting of a rock, or springing of a mine ; and in another moment, we saw Lady Laura and Pinchbeck blown up into the air, and then fall apparently unhurt upon the deck of a vessel, while Philomella, who had escaped from the crumbling balcony, seemed to consider Pinchbeck as the author of the catastrophe, and wreaked her vengeance upon him accordingly by flapping her wings, pecking at his forehead till it bled in divers places, and screaming vigorously on his head, till one of the sailors at length got her off.

We, of course, instantly turned back, and found that Dr. O'Donnell, Lord Frederick, and Captain Dapperwit, at the noise of the explosion, had done the same. The accident, it appeared, had originated in

a spark falling upon some gunpowder in the shop. A plank having been laid across, we were all soon on board the vessel that had so fortunately received Lady Laura, and the companion of her flight. She was pursing up her mouth, sighing and groaning, with her head first at one side, and then on the other, trying hard to faint, but quite unable to manage it, while Pinchbeck was staunching the blood that flowed from the wounds "the envious Poll had made!" exclaiming, "Do you see me now? this is terrible;" while Dr. O'Donnell was executing a sort of tessellated pavement of patches of square and oblong pieces of court-plaster round his forehead, which by no means added to the beauty of his appearance.

"Rather too much of the elevating principle; eh, Lady Laura?" said Dapperwit, as soon as he had ascertained that she was none the worse for her aërial excursion.

"My dear Mr. Pinchbeck," remonstrated Lord Frederick, with ludicrous gravity, "I hope you do not insist upon it as a universal principle in your distribution of wealth, that it is expedient to go off with other men's wives. I had no idea you were such a flighty person."

"Dapperwit," said my uncle, "go round, and see if any one is hurt in the house: O'Donnell, you had better go with him," he then added, turning to Lady Laura, "As you perceive, it is not safe to live over gunpowder; and, indeed, I should say that altogether

this was not a healthy situation. I hope, after this accident, which might have ended fatally, that your Ladyship will remove to a more airy quarter of the town."

"Remove? oh no! thank you, I think I am in the very best sita-ation in —, indeed I take it as a personal offence if any one even hints to me that they think otherwise; for to attack my house makes me feel as the martyrs of old felt when their religion was arraigned, and besides my love of the beautiful towers above everything, even above danger; and look," added she, first pointing to the muddy river, and then to the dusty tops of the trees at a distance: "Just look at the exquisite combination of wood and water that I have here. Oh, no! no change for me, it is decidedly the best sita-ation in —."

My Uncle shrugged his shoulders, took a pinch of snuff, (which he must have found a great comfort in that odoriferous sita-ation,) and said nothing, for Lady Laura's infatuation about the horrible hole in which she lived was beyond the pale of common-sense.

Captain Dapperwit now returned, bringing the distressing intelligence, that poor Dermot had been killed, that Mr. Trigger, the landlord, had lost two fingers, but his wife and servant being out at the time, as well as Lady Laura's cook, they had all escaped.

"Poor Dermot," said my uncle, "or rather his poor mother, how on earth are we to break it to her?"

“Really,” said Lady Laura, folding her arms with the most stoical philosophy, and stretching out her feet horizontally, with a most masculine air, as was her wont, “I don’t think there is anything to fret about, we should think ourselves very lucky that it is only one of the servants, for the explosion might have taken place when we were all in the drawing-room; and as for Misther Trigger, (for Lady Laura when quite at her ease, and not doing English, always said Misther, sisther, and lobsther!) it will make him more careful I hope, for the future.”

While this eminently philosophical and benevolent lady was still speaking, to my infinite delight and surprise I saw Dermot in *propria persona*, leisurely advancing along the quay in his shirt-sleeves, with one side of his face much blackened, and a black mass lying across his left arm.

“Why, here is Dermot,” cried I.

“Yes, here I am, Missh, at laste as much as is lift of me, for I hadn’t time to stay, and luck if I’d picked myself all up compleate; bad look to it for a hornet’s nest, sure blowing up was de fittest ting for it, only dey should have let Christians get shut of it fust.”

“What on earth is that you have hanging on your arm, Dermot?” asked his mistress.

“Which? is it dis shupply of tinder? Shure, don’t you see, Ma’am, dat it ish rags just; but if your Leedyship wantsh to know what it wash, it wash my livery; och! murder, a terrible blight of de buther-

cups. I hope it won't affict de milk and crame any how?"

There is nothing more revolting than one of the concentrated and masked rages of a mock placid person; an honest fit of passion explodes and is over, but these mild martyr tempers are always practically illustrating the fiendish maxim, that the art of dissimulating is the art of vengeance. At this news of the demolished livery, Lady Laura looked red, white, green, and yellow, all in the same moment.

"You will leave my service instantly, sirrah!" said she, screwing up her mouth even to unusual tightness, lest otherwise the living flames should issue from it as from the mouth of a volcano. "I always *bid* you take off your livery the moment the company went; you know I don't care what coat you have on, or whether you have any coat at all when I am alone; your conduct is unpardonable, quite unpardonable; there ought to be a law enabling one to imprison servants for such wanton and careless destruction of one's property; get out of my sight, your wages shall be sent to your mother this evening, with an account of your scandalous conduct."

"Why, thin, indade my Leedy," said Dermot, scratching his right ear, "if I wash to have tuck off my livery ivry time I was blow'd up, sorrow a taste of it I'd iver have had to my back, for shure it was blowing me up all day long you wash, and how wash I to know dat it wash an ixtra blowing up in rale

arnest I wash to git to day. Howivir, yer humble sarvent, Ma'am, ash I am to go, and at all ivintsh, dere's won advantage in laving your Leedyship's sarvice, which ish, dat itsh an unpossibility to go furdur and fare worse."

And thus terminated Lady Laura O'Shindy's last *fête*. I could not help wondering all the way homé, in my youthful ignorance of the world, that so great a philanthropist as Lady Laura, should have borne the intelligence of a fellow-creature's death so stoically, and yet have been so utterly beside herself at the loss of her servant's livery. Time has since solved the enigma, thanks to philosophy; the former did not cost her a single pang, whereas the latter had cost her—a few pounds!

CHAPTER IX.

IF one could but jump certain epochs of one's life, as one has the option of doing in their narration, what a blessed thing it would be! But no: in Life's preparatory school, Necessity is the usher, and Fate the rigorous master, that never lets us off of a single difficulty. We must either conquer them, or take the consequences of not doing so. A hard school, truly! where there are few prizes, and fewer holidays. But, courage! let not the dullest, or the most buffeted amongst us, despair; for we know that the breaking-up will come at last, when we "shall arise, and go to our Father," and then, if we have but profited by His lessons, we shall thank the hard Master, that has fitted us for our eternal home.

On the day that we left ———, and once more embarked in 'The Ocean Pearl,' the sky looked un-

usually grey and gloomy. There are often these sort of kindly sympathies in Nature, for frequently her tears mingle with ours over the newly-made grave, and as frequently her brightest smiles light up some bridals, while she weeps prophetic torrents upon others. It would indeed have been unkind in the sky of ——, usually so clearly blue, and cloudlessly bright, if it had not now looked sadly down upon us, when, for the last time, we looked so sadly up to it, oh! for the last time! It is a moral cestus of Venus, which bestows beauty upon everything, even to the Palazzo Vascello! Distance was beginning to “lend enchantment to the view.”

The whole population of —— had turned out, and thronged the beach and the pier. My uncle was not to return there, as the appointment was to be given to an officer of inferior rank, and the salary to be considerably reduced; but had the people of —— been following his funeral, their silence could not have been more profound and mournful, or their tears have flowed more copiously. There is nothing in seeing women, children, and beggars cry, for tears are at once their vocation and their heritage here below; but when stern-visaged, strong-hearted men weep, the course of nature seems overruled, that feeling may be avenged, and one is awed before the miracle, as the Eglonites and Amorites were before the sun and moon, when they stood still in the Valley of Ajalon! My uncle seemed equally affected—perhaps more

painfully so—for it is a great charge for one heart to have to respond to thousands; but if ever heart was broad enough, deep enough, and true enough for the task, his was. He cordially returned the pressure of the hands within his reach, but uttered not a word. Oh! well and wisely, I ween, are things meted out, for how would half the world ever express their small ideas, and smaller feelings, but for great words? and how would great and intense feeling ever be expressed but for silence?

It was not till ‘The Ocean Pearl’ had weighed anchor, and had rounded the point of the bay, that one unanimous “God bless you, Sir George!—God speed you!” burst upon the air, as if from the lungs—ay, and the heart, too,—of a giant, and white handkerchiefs fluttered in all directions, as if there had been a battle of the angels, and their mutilated wings had fallen in mid-air. My uncle stood with his hat off till the yacht was out of sight, when I saw him press his handkerchief to his eyes as he turned away to go down to the cabin. I was about to follow him, when Mademoiselle de Guilleragues touched my arm.

“Don’t!” said she. “Full hearts, like large vessels, require much room. They are always best left for a short time to themselves.”

Usually, ——— from the sea, looked, with its white houses, and gilded vanes, like Aphrodite at her toilette, robed in white, with a sapphire girdle of blue waves; but now a mist was rapidly rising, and

shrouding the island like a veil, as if the very earth and sea were sighing forth their *adieux* in a thick and troubled breath.

“Pauvre île !” said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, as she leant over the side of the vessel ; “elle a l’air d’une sœur grise ce matin.”

This voyage was a melancholy one to all parties—even my aunts had subsided into a dead calm. My uncle looked harassed and anxious, and, being still busied with papers and accounts, which seemed to diffuse a poisoned atmosphere around him, as if they had been upas leaves, he seldom came on deck before sunset, which was, consequently, the happiest hour in the four-and-twenty to us, for “coming events” began to “cast their shadows before,” and Grace and I felt that vague, enigmatical sadness, which each new page we turned of after-life only too fully solved.

Home!—that is, the first cradle-home of our childhood—is a sanctuary guarded by household gods, with whose fidelity not even the omnipotent *Fatum* itself can tamper, and as long as we remain within its threshold, and look from thence upon the outer world, all seems light and bloom, or if a transient cloud does flit over the distant view, it is sure to have a silver lining, ever ready to turn upon the crowd of our own hopes.

But from the very first step we take without this sacred threshold into life’s dread arena beyond, our own shadows fall upon our path, darkening it as we

advance, and placing a fearful odds of untangible incertitude between us and our assailants; or even if we retire from the contest, and, like Diogenes in his tub, hug ourselves within the precincts of our own hearts, letting Imagination's bright, prismatic tints touch into glory all our ideal prospects, still, there is always some insolent Alexander of Reality! coming to stand in our sunshine. Mademoiselle de Guilleragues was too happy at the idea of returning to her own country again, after so many years of exile, to feel as sorry at leaving us, as we felt at her going; besides, after my Aunt Marley's return from Ireland, we were also to go to Paris, and she was never tired of planning all we were to see and to do, and, above all, the long evenings we were to have with her in the Rue du Bac,—in short, "Les Veillées du Château" were to be nothing to them! But to us, the idea of the six or eight months that must elapse before we met again, seemed interminable, and, indeed, half that period is a sort of spurious eternity, if one has to pass it either in grief, pain, or regret. Upon the whole, the only really happy person "in that small craft upon that world of waters" was Mr. Waltham, for not only was he about to see his mother and sister, of whom he was exceedingly fond, but the dream of his life was about to be realized, for Lord Frederick Farnham had got his father, Lord Plantagenet, to return him for his close borough of Gammonboor.

As the royal road to happiness is the making others

happy, Lord Frederick himself was in high spirits, but I am sorry to say had very little mercy upon poor Captain Dapperwit, who looked, as Lord Frederick expressed it, like Don Quixote run to seed; and, to say the truth, the comparison was not much exaggerated, for the once spruce aide-de-camp now appeared terribly crest-fallen and woe-begone: the cause of his affliction was this. Thanks to Lady Laura O'Shindy's friendship and diplomacy, she had not only sent poor Miss Leah Abraham home in violent hysterics from her last charming *festa*, but had so vaunted her own friendly zeal and arduous endeavours to get Captain Dapperwit to marry her, that she had made her friend the talk and laughing-stock of ——, notwithstanding Dapperwit's honourable entreaties that she would be silent on the subject: the consequence was, that the poor girl had become seriously ill from shame and vexation. This was very hard upon the hapless aide-de-camp, who had taken every pains to prevent it, and who was not the least in love with the ready-made victim Lady Laura's delicacy and discriminating tact had consigned to him.

Though somewhat of a fop, Dapperwit was by no means devoid of good feeling; and even had he been originally hard and selfish, I defy him to have lived for six years in close intimacy with my uncle, and remained so; for high and noble hearts are moral loadstones, which can raise even the most sordid and iron natures to their own level, by the irresistible force of

attraction and attachment. So the very morning of our departure from ——, half an hour before we embarked, Dapperwit had screwed his courage to the sticking-point, and written a formal proposal to the young lady, requesting she would forward her answer to him in London, at Cox and Greenwood's—how romantic!—letting him know whether he was to be the happiest or most miserable of men; for such is the orthodox form of those missals (and love-letters are always official, when they are not overflowing from the heart): however, as Voltaire truly says,

“Toujours un peu de vérité se mêle au plus grossier mensonge.”

And this obligato phrase of making him the happiest or the most miserable of men, like oracular answers (from those of the Cumean Sibyl's, down to the Vicar of Wakefield's to his wife, when, during a curtain-lecture, that good lady would extort from him his opinion touching the relative value of Squire Thornhill's attentions to their daughter Olivia) might be taken either way; being, according to the wishes of those most concerned, equally applicable to both of the events—whether the *pro* or the *con*; and consequently it was because Dapperwit feared that Miss Leah Abraham would consent to make him the happiest of men, that he went about looking the most miserable, as Lord Frederick said.

As for Nelly, though decidedly less savage in the aggregate, she yet preserved a sufficiently porcupine

demeanour towards her slave and servant Jeffs, to remind him, that on board the 'Ocean Pearl' at least, he was only the boatswain, and not the master.

With regard to my aunts as nothing could exceed the *empressement* and civility of the custom-house functionaries at Southampton, and the hotel people were equally cap-in-hand (as they always are to a good harvest in the shape of a large suite), it was not till they had arrived in London, at the gloomy hotel in Jermyn Street, where we put up, that they began to feel that moral cold-water shock which first informed them that they were mere ordinary mortals, and not the greatest people in the world, as they had hitherto been in their own estimation. But London, like love, (except that love is all flame, and London all smoke); but otherwise, London, like love, levels all distinctions, and many a brilliant star that shone out in a provincial, or a provisional hemisphere, arrived amid the misty nebulae of the giant city, is obliged to bid "a long farewell to all its greatness!"

Men, however, are never to be pitied for returning to London; for even when they have been playing amateur kings, as ambassadors, viceroys, or governors-general, still London is their real focus, being the place, *par excellence*, of their favourite haunts and associations, to say nothing of the club-windows, where, as Nelly tersely and graphically expressed it, "dey look for all de world like a set of shtuffed birds in glassh-cases;" and however ornithologists may

dispute as to the birds, of the stuffing there is not the least doubt.

Well, thanks to his old friends, and his old haunts, my uncle for a time threw off his care-worn look, and my aunts were too busy preparing for their journey to Ireland, to feel either *ennui* or the change of their position ; so that Grace and I were the only really-miserable people of the party ; for we had lost everything, and gained nothing. Nelly had gone to her snuff-shop in Fleet Street, which, as she truly said, was no place for us to be coming to ; and if it had been, how were we to get there ? Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had departed for the delights of the Rue du Bac.

We were to be sent in a day or two to what my Aunt Marley considered a very fine school, because it was a very expensive one, at a Miss James's, at Kensington ; and consequently *pro tempore*, we had no governess, neither was there that profusion of carriages, and servants, we had at —, and the one pair of job horses, that this part of the establishment had now dwindled down to, found ample employment in my aunt's shopping by day, and parties by night ; and had my uncle not had his saddle horses, he might have been as badly off, for air and exercise, as we were ; it is true Lord Frederick had brought his two younger sisters, Lady Fanny and Lady Lucy, to see us. And very charming girls they were ; and we had passed one happy day with them amid lawns and flowers at Lady Plantagenet's villa at Twickenham.

But what new acquaintance can ever replace old ones in young hearts? And once or twice during the day we had passed at Twickenham, we felt as if we had been guilty of some vile piece of treachery towards poor Bloom Belzoni, and the O'Donnells, because we had caught ourselves being happy without them. Lady Paulett and Fiametta had also called, and taken us out to drive once or twice; but I can't say that it was very amusing to sit in the carriage for hours while they were paying visits. So that, for the most part, my aunts being unable to take us out, unless one of them, and one of us remained at home (the carriage being a chariot) our miserable time was spent in migrations, like perturbed spirits, from the large gloomy drawing-room to the still more gloomy bedroom leading out of it, and looking upon high walls, and dingy leads, where the few faint sunbeams from a London sky had no chance of penetrating, with the fearful odds against them of fog, soot, and smoke.

At length, the last day of this bastille life arrived, and even the idea of going to school, detestable as it had at first been, was a relief as a means of getting out of this bondage; besides, at fourteen and sixteen, we were no longer children, and, therefore, at school might fairly anticipate the privileges of grown-up girls, privileges which my aunts were by no means inclined to award to us; so had not the thought of leaving, even for a short time, our dear, good uncle hung like a dark cloud over all, it would have been a

blessed reprieve to feel that this was the last day we should pass at the hotel in Jermyn-street. My Aunt Marley was out, and had taken Grace with her, leaving word, however, that she should be back in an hour, as Mr. Grattan was to call; he had been my poor mother's god-father, of which her sisters were very naturally not a little proud; and as I was very anxious to see this great man (for I have an infinite admiration for *really* great men, though no respector of heroes in general, or runner after celebrities, merely because they are such), I asked my uncle, who had remained at home to write letters, if I might stay in the room when Grattan came.

"To be sure, darling," said he, "and I can promise you a good scene, unless he is greatly improved since yesterday; for I've been drilling him for the levée on Thursday, for the last week; and up to the present moment, I cannot get him to do anything, but tumble over his sword. I am afraid he'll end, despite all my exertions, by falling at the Regent's feet."

"It ought to be *vice versâ*," said I; "Grattan being so immeasurably the greater man of the two."

"I quite agree with you, Mirry, and except perhaps a score or two of his Royal Highness's tailors, I don't think any one would attempt to dispute that fact."

My uncle then went on writing, and I, with a heavy sigh, took from my bosom, and began reading for the twentieth time, since her departure. poor

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' last gift in the form of a set of maxims in verse, which I shall transcribe. Nobody is obliged to read them; I only wish to Heaven that every one was obliged to act upon them, and then, though we might have less talk in the world, we should have more truth and honesty.

Rendez au créateur ce que l'on doit lui rendre,
Réfléchissez avant que de rien entreprendre.
Point de société qu'avec d'honnêtes gens,
Et ne vous flattez pas de vos heureux talens.

Conformez-vous toujours aux sentiments des autres,
Cédez honnêtement si l'on combat les vôtres,
Donnez attention à tout ce que l'on dit;
Et n'affectez jamais d'avoir beaucoup d'esprit.

N'entretenez personne au-delà de sa sphère,
Et dans tous vos discours tâchez d'être sincère,
Tenez votre parole inviolablement,
Et ne promettez point inconsidérément.

Soyez officieuse, complaisante, douce, affable,
Et pour tous les humains, d'un abord favorable:
Sans être familier, ayez un air aisé;
Ne décidez de rien qu'après l'avoir pésé.

Aimez sans intérêt, pardonnez sans faiblesse;
Soyez soumise aux grands sans aucune bassesse:
Cultivez avec soin l'amitié d'un chacun;
À l'égard des procès n'en intentez aucun.

Ne vous informez point des affaires des autres;
Sans affectations dissimulez les vôtres:
Prêtez de bonne grâce avec discernement;
Quand il faut récompenser, faites le noblement.*

Et de quelque façon que vous vouliez paraître,
Que ce soit sans excès, et sans vous méconnaître,
Compatissez toujours aux disgrâces d'autrui,
Supportez ses défauts, soyez fidèle ami.

Surmontez le chagrin où l'esprit s'abandonne,
Et ne le faites pas rejaillir sur personne.
Où la discorde règne, apportez-y la paix;
Et ne vous vengez point, qu'à force de bienfaits.

Reprenez sans aigreur, louez sans flatterie;
Riez passablement, entendez raillerie;
Estimez un chacun dans sa profession;
Et ne critiquez rien par ostentation.

Ne reprochez jamais les plaisirs que vous faites;
Et mettez-les au rang des affaires secrètes:
Prévenez les besoins des amis malheureux;
Sans prodigalité rendez-vous généreux.

Modérez les transports d'une bile naissante,
Et ne parlez qu'en bien, d'une personne absente;
Fuyez le nom d'ingrate, soyez reconnaissant;
Et songez, qu'être ladre, n'est pas être prudent.

* I fear the dear Whigs of the present day—those distinguished incapables—distinguished, above all, for their parsimony and ill-breeding—are too old and incorrigible to benefit by this maxim, or else they need it most sadly.

Parlez peu, pensez bien, et ne trompez personne;
 Et faites toujours cas de ce que l'on vous donne:
 Ne tyrannisez pas le pauvre débiteur,
 Pour vous, comme pour lui, soyez de bonne humeur.

Au bonheur du prochain, ne portez pas envie;
 Ne divulguez jamais ce que l'on vous confie;
 Ne vous vantez de rien, gardez votre secret,
 Après quoi—mettez-vous au-dessus du caquet.

Although I was not at that time aware that the last line was the most difficult, not to say impossible, of these maxims, I was still pondering over it, till gradually lulled by the monotonous creaking of my uncle's pen as it moved rapidly across his paper, I turned my eyes from the window that looked into the dull street upon the duller people, and plunged into one of those waking day-dreams, the golden portals of which memory so hospitably opens to us, as a refuge against the desolation or the inclemency of that often insupportable epoch—the present!

I was again back at dear ———, bounding through its fresh, balmy, elastic air, free and buoyant as the blue waves that kissed its shores, at one moment listening to the legendary murmurings of their rippling tide, at another inhaling the delicious perfume of its flowery meads and haunted dells, which were like Coleridge's description of

“Boccaccio's garden, with its faëry,
 The love, the joyance, and the gallantry;
 An idyll with Boccaccio's spirit warm,
 Framed in the silent poesy of form.”

There was a certain picturesque old rope-walk, on one side of which ran a little brawling vagabond rivulet, famous for its smooth pebbles, bright waters, and green cresses; and at the end of this walk was an old-fashioned bosquet or charmille, composed entirely of pink and white May, which flowered so luxuriantly in the season, that the birds, bees, and butterflies, seemed actually intoxicated with the delicious mareschino odour of its flowers; and this charmille led into a meadow, which in the spring was a rare and lovely specimen of nature's most exquisite enamelling.

The rope-walk, the rivulet, the charmille, and the meadow, had been our favourite haunts as children; and poor Bloom Belzoni used always to say, that amid the soft airs and sweet perfumes of that most lovely bosquet she should like to live and die. Is there such a thing as second sight? or does the electric fluid of certain thoughts act as spells upon the invisible and impalpable denizens of the spiritual sphere by which we are always surrounded, and compel them to raise for a moment the impervious and mysterious veil that shuts out their world from ours, and remove the adamantine barrier Omnipotence has placed between the present and the future? I know not; but this I know, that at that moment, I beheld as distinctly as the instant before I had seen the smoke-dried houses on the opposite side of the street, Bloom Belzoni lying on a perfect bed of that beau-

tiful purple Brazilian flower, the *Flor de Queresmo*, of which, in the whole island, her father possessed but one solitary plant; the beautiful May of the charmille blushed, and breathed above her, while she looked scarcely less radiant or less happy.

At her feet knelt Philip Vavasour ; her hand was clasped in his, their eyes were rivetted on each other : neither spoke : and yet it was as if their hearts lit up the place, there was such a glow about it. The very birds were silent, as if in mute ecstasy ; they seemed to listen to the flowers, whose voiceless words made each passing breeze vocal with sweet airs ; in short, it seemed as if happiness, breathless from her rapid flight from the pursuit of mortals, had stopped to rest one moment in that lovely spot, and all nature paused to do her homage ; but in vain, she would not stay : she never does, for her home is not on earth. But as the deadly sirocco whirls desolation across the desert, so darkness suddenly fell upon this fair scene ; Belzoni, like an incarnate simoon, appeared at the other end of the charmille, lowering fearfully on the pair. Philip started to his feet, and fled into the meadow : passion, as I had once before seen it, convulsing every feature of his fine face ; while the purple flowers, upon which Bloom was lying, suddenly became white as snow, as if they had grown grey with one great grief, as when sorrow gets the start of time, and withers up young hearts before they have well opened to life's few summer hours.

Next, the fair girl herself faded visibly away, and the sunbeams, which till then had wooed the fresh leaves, like Jove in golden showers, were now changed into ghastly grave-lights, and flitted round the couch upon which I had so distinctly seen the form of Bloom Belzoni an instant before. I pressed my hand to my eyes to shut out the horrible vision, but a faint scream escaped me.

“Heavens! my dear child, what is the matter?” said my uncle, hastily rising, and coming over to me; “I’ll send for Halford immediately,” added he, about to ring the bell.

“No, don’t!” said I, keeping him back; “it’s nothing; I shall be better in a minute: I’m quite well now.”

“Where are you in pain, my child; you look so pale: you had better let me send for Halford?”

“No, no, dear uncle, I am not ill.”

“Not ill! then what made you utter such a piercing cry just now?”

“You would laugh at me if I told you.”

“Laugh at you!” said he, drawing my hand towards him, and kissing my forehead: “am I then such an ill-natured old fellow as to laugh at anything that pains or annoys my poor little Red Boots?”

“No, that you are not, only you might think Red Boots a goose.”

“Well, I hope I’m at least capable of saying so! to her if I do,” said my uncle, laughing; “so tell

me, darling, what it was that made you scream just now?"

I then related the vision I had seen.

"My poor child," said my uncle, feeling my pulse, "I am afraid the confinement of these last two weeks has made you ill and nervous. "I suppose," added he, ringing the bell, "we can get a job carriage here; and after Grattan has been here I must go out, first to Phipps about my eyes, which have pained me terribly for the last week, and then to hunt for a house; after which, Mirry, we'll take a drive into the country."

"Hunt for a house! why I thought, dear uncle, you had one in Berkeley Square?"

"Yes, I had one, but I have been obliged to let it; and, as beggars must not be choosers, I must now content myself with a small house in some dingy street," and he sighed heavily.

"Oh! don't say you are a beggar!" said I, bursting into tears, and throwing my arms round his neck.

"At all events, Mirry," he replied, trying to look cheerful, as he put back my hair with both his hands, "I'll be a sensible one, and never ask for what the world has not to give—charity!"

Here the waiter entered in answer to the bell.

"Oh! pray, can I have a job carriage!"

"Certainly, Sir George."

"Then be so good as to order one to be at the door at two o'clock."

"Very good, Sir," and the man withdrew, while

my uncle (no doubt wishing to preclude any further conversation upon his own affairs), turned to the table, and resumed his writing.

Madame de Staël says, it is terrible to be condemned to celebrity, without the power of being known. It would be terrible if the world's opinion—which is nine times out of ten founded upon false premises—was either worth grieving about, or exulting at; but there is another predicament infinitely more terrible, which is, when we cannot explain ourselves to ourselves—when our feelings, like rebellious subjects, regicidically turn upon the sovereign mind, and overthrow that which should rule them. In these internal, as in all other civil wars, it is easier to see and suffer from the wrong, than to check or repair it. My mind was now in this dethroned state; I was so helplessly buffeted by the anarchy of painful and conflicting feelings, that I could neither control nor explain, though habit is most unquestionably second nature, and the vulgarities of poverty are as revolting to a refined and cultivated taste, as vicious conduct and conversation are to a virtuous mind.

Yet, I hope I was neither so narrow of heart, nor so shallow of intellect, as to fret upon my own account, because I had so suddenly begun to exchange the purple, gold, and fine linen of life for its delft and huccaback. No, thank Heaven! in this, my first grief, I was free from the leprosy of selfishness. It was of my uncle, and my uncle only, that I thought.

Golden hearts should be set in gold, or else they become powerless. Wealth in his hands had been what it should ever be, but so seldom is,—a lever lent by God to man, to enable him to raise any weight of misery, and so lighten the fearful burdens from which so many groan, and would otherwise die. Of all the luxuries that wealth can purchase, human happiness is the most costly; and no doubt it is upon this account that even the richest people are so prudent, that they seldom invest much capital in this species of treasure; for the mighty of this world prefer, like Cicero, irrigating their laurels with wine, and yet, should there be a horticultural display in Elysium, they may be surprised to find that those only which were watered by the tears of gratitude have flourished greenly on into immortality.

Amid all the vague torture I was enduring relative to my uncle's altered position, one idea at least stood out tangibly and distinctly, and upon that I now cast the anchor of my doubts: if he were so poor, why were we sent to so expensive a school as Miss James's? for my aunts had not failed to reiterate that £300 a-year was to be paid for each of us, and though I had not, it is true, very distinct ideas at that time of either the positive or comparative value of £600 a-year, and upon that very account, perhaps, the sum appeared to me even greater than it was; yet a further knowledge of Miss James's "Establishment" rather augmented and confirmed my ideas of its mag-

nitude than diminished them, for it certainly was a most enormous sum to pay for learning ignorance and vulgarity, which were the only things thoroughly inculcated, because the only things thoroughly understood and practised, in the aforesaid "Establishment."

At one moment, I was on the point of ending this painful perplexity by throwing my arms round my uncle's neck, and imploring him not to incur this additional expense upon our account; but I was deterred the next by the idea that not only my doing so would be attributed to my own dislike to the notion of going to this school, but from the still stronger one, that all appeals were useless when once my aunt's fiat had gone forth; for I fear, had they wished to burn the house, my poor uncle would not have opposed them,—so unsoldier-like a dread had he of war! What should I do?—or, rather, what could I do to combat all this impalpable evil, and at least save my uncle expense, if I could not resort to the far pleasanter, and more expeditious course of re-filling his coffers? No one ever was more learned in faëry lore than I was, but in this first knotty dilemma of actual, positive, work-a-day life, in vain I explored its most occult archives. Alas! all they did for me was to make me regret that there were no such things as fairies; if there had been, oh! how soon that dear, care-worn face opposite to me—so calm in its resignation—so kind even in its sorrow—should have been made radiant with joy! I was still

sitting in that gloomy window, building cloud palaces, and lining them with the sun, when the door was thrown open, and Morden announced:

“ Mr. Grattan, Sir George.”

At this time Grattan was much bent, for it was only four years before his death. He generally walked with his hands behind his back, and his eyes bent on the ground, as if intensely pre-occupied by some engrossing thought—as, indeed, he always was—for when, during the course of a long, glorious, and consistent career, a man has had a whole people in his heart, and a whole country in his head, as Grattan had, he has most indubitably sufficient matter for pre-occupation. Why is it that in this age of rapid progress, and universal diffusion of knowledge, when intellect is homœopathically irrigated with intellect, we have no giants, as of old? The secret is this: it is not that there is less capacity, nay, nor even less genius, but that there is less—or, rather, that there is *no* sincerity: formerly, men’s opinions *were* *them*, and they fought for, and defended them, with the same dauntless and uncompromising courage with which they would have defended their individual lives. From this deep and pure source of Reality sprang that noble truth, Patriotism. Like that of chivalry, the *name* still exists amongst us, but the *fact* is extinct. And what wonder? For what could that most atrocious maxim, which is the pivot of modern politics, namely, that “ the chief aim of legis-

lation is the protection of property!" give rise to, but a race of trading politicians, so shamelessly venal, that they are only rendered innocuous from being contemptible?

What made Burke open his doors to Crabbe, and know that the home that was large enough for one was large enough for two?—Sincerity. *He felt* the philanthropy he professed: it was the necessitous *man* he welcomed, not the *rising poet*. And what made Lord Erskine turn a deaf ear even to the urgent letter of appeal and introduction Crabbe brought him, but that *he lacked* this *reality* of nature, and belonged to that dawning faction of cliqueism which has been the all-blighting upas of the present era. He turned from the distress of the man, because he ignored the embryo fame of the author. For both of them fate kept the unities. Lord Erskine became Lord Chancellor of England, eloped to Scotland in the appropriate costume of an old woman (would not his chancellor's gown have done as well?) and wrote a novel!* Burke shook the senate with his eloquence, and riveted that eloquence in his essays; he also expounded "The Sublime and Beautiful," and he did well, for

"They best can paint them who have felt them most!"

But to continue, for to go from Burke to such a man as Grattan is less a return than a continuation;

* "Armata."

what with his white hair and his fragile appearance, the illustrious apostle of Catholic Emancipation gave me the idea of a silver-ash; but there was a genuine expression of benevolence in his eyes, and a delicacy in the chiselling of the nose, that seemed to bear testimony to the former beauty of the face; it is perhaps, needless to say, that the inflections of his voice were peculiarly melodious, for who can be really an orator without that organ being attuned to the most correct harmony? As well might one attempt to convey an idea of the beauties of Mozart and Beethoven upon an instrument out of tune, as to hope that even the most brilliant and profound ideas, clothed in the choicest language, can constitute oratory, if nature has been a niggard, and withheld a good voice; they may indeed become silent eloquence reduced to paper, but can never attain to that high standard, spoken with a defective enunciation, or harsh intonation.

“Ah!” cried my uncle, starting up to receive his old friend, and shaking his fore-finger menacingly at him, “woe betide us if we have not got our lesson better to-day.”

“Oh! to-day, my dear Paulett,” said Grattan laughing, as he shook him by both hands, “even if you die of envy I shall expect you to acknowledge that I am a finished courtier.”

“Not you,” said my uncle, laughing; “the stuff is not in you, you’ll have to content yourself with being weighed by posterity in the humbler scales of patriot-

ism and eloquence, for I fear we shall never make a courtier of you."

"Bless me, how like poor Miriam," said Grattan, now perceiving me for the first time, as I stood up upon his approach to the window.

"Ah! poor thing, it is her youngest daughter," replied my uncle.

"In that case," said Grattan, holding out his hand, and at the same time kissing me, "I have credentials to prove that I am entitled to a kiss, for I was your poor mother's god-father."

"At all events you are entitled to the love and admiration of the whole world," said I, returning the kiss with a *con amore* energy that I am sure would greatly have shocked Miss Squiggins, and every other *British female*!

"You must not be surprised, my dear Grattan," said my uncle, "at receiving compliments from this young lady, for I assure you no one does more justice to your speeches, whether in reading or appreciating them; only take care," added he, laughing, "that she don't become your rival, for I assure you we are no contemptible orator ourselves."

"Indeed, I perceive," said this dear old man, with a gallantry that was charming from its amiability, "that I shall have a most formidable rival; for what is the use of my wasting my breath in advocating Catholic Emancipation, and inveighing against the Slave Trade, when she will be going about the world

enthraling all classes, and making more slaves than a whole wilderness of American and West Indian planters put together."

"Bravo! spoken like a courtier," cried my uncle. "Now I begin to have some hopes of you; but there's nothing like striking while the iron is hot," and so saying, he rang the bell.

"There, I told you," said Grattan, laughing, "that I'd force you into owning to-day that I was a finished courtier."

"Not so fast, my dear Sir, your honour is at stake, so that must be proved at the point of the sword. Oh! Morden, be so good," added he to the latter, who now answered the bell, "to get some one to help you to bring a boot-box, or an imperial here, and bring down one of my foils and a sword-belt. Ah! now," laughed he, offering his snuff-box to Grattan, "that we come to cold steel, the courtier don't seem quite so confident."

"I should think," said I, "Mr. Grattan must be too much accustomed to foils to mind them."

"Well turned," cried my uncle: "there, Grattan, you are paid for your slaves."

"Only in giving myself for a hostage, I fear," bowed he gallantly. "Talking of things being well-turned, have you heard Bushe's last? it is very neat."

"No," said my uncle; "pray, let us have it; for *bon mots* are the very reverse of birds, and

one in the *bush* is worth two in anybody else's hands."

"Last March," resumed Grattan, "when the gentleman of the Leinster Bar went on circuit, you must know that amongst them was a certain Mr. Cæsar Colclough. Well, I need not remind you that there is a wide and dangerous arm of the river Nore at the ferry of Ballinlaw, which must either be crossed, or the traveller must go a round by the bridge! but on the evening in question, there had been a terrific storm; the river ran mountains high, the ferry-boat was leaky, the boatmen irresolute, and foreboding evil; so that these distinguished members of the bar, preparing as they were for hanging, naturally wished to escape drowning, and therefore prudently resolved to make for the bridge, with the exception of Cæsar Colclough, who, with the indomitable courage of his illustrious namesake, resolved to cross the ferry; and so taking his saddle-bags under his arm (for they contained his fortunes), he gallantly flung himself into the crazy boat, and off he went. His affectionate colleagues, standing silently and mournfully on the shore, breathless with anxiety, while Cæsar, like his prototype, at once buffeted and defied the billows: one moment they saw him on the summit of a wave that seemed to lash the very clouds, while the next he was totally submerged. In this stage of affairs it was that Bushe, picking up a pebble and a piece of slate from the beach, wrote this epigram, which indeed has the

additional, that is, the professional merit of supplying a kind of contingency with a double aspect; if he perished, it would have commemorated his death; if he survived, (as he did), it celebrated his triumph.

“While meaner souls the tempest struck with awe,
Intrepid Colclough cross’d at Ballinlaw;
And thus, to cheer his shiv’ring boatmen, brags,
‘You carry Cæsar —— and his saddle bags!’”

“Capital!” cried my uncle.

“Yes, it’s so terse,” said Grattan, “not amplified and diluted, as Lucan has done the original in his ‘Pharsalia.’ You, of course, have heard his *mot* about the Duke of Richmond?”

“No; I have been so long out of the country, that I have heard nothing,” said my uncle.

“I need not tell you that the Orange party call all of us, who are in favour of Catholic Emancipation, Papists. One day, during the Duke of Richmond’s Viceroyalty, we were dining at the Castle. After dinner, as the night waned, and approached the small hours, the Duke as usual was under the table, and would have been nearly suffocated, if we had not extricated him.

“‘Come,’ said Lord Clonmell, ‘bear a hand, Bushe.’

“‘I shall do no such thing,’ he replied; ‘for were I found assisting at the *Elevation of the Host*, you would then indeed have reason to call me a Papist.’”

We were still laughing at this sally of the Chief

Justice's (or rather at the Solicitor-General's, as he then was), when Morden returned, bearing in, assisted by one of the waiters, an imperial, which was placed at the upper end of the room, a cloth table-cover spread over it, and an arm-chair then put upon it; after which the servants withdrew.

This was the *mise en scène* for one of the Prince Regent's levees. My uncle, taking the *grand rôle* of the Regent (and a most colossal roll his Royal Highness was at that time), and Grattan personating the whole court, which after all was not so arduous an undertaking for him, as it might have been to many, considering that he was a host in himself. After the girding on of the foil, and an impressive drilling as to the manner of his progress towards the throne, my uncle turned to the glass to complete his own toilet, which he did by taking off his black neckerchief, and rolling a whole bale of white muslin round his throat, till it looked enormous; and then, in order to imitate the Regent's hyperion and luxuriant wig, he ran his fingers through his hair on each side; but as he wore his own hair with powder, and had not yet discarded the tail of the last century, his hair only stuck out like two enormous white wings, and looked so grotesquely ridiculous, that it threw us into convulsions of laughter.

“ Well, my dear Paulett,” said Grattan, “ as soon as you have done ineffectually aping your betters, I'm ready to begin paying my court to them.”

When my uncle had done laughing too at his own appearance, and had put down his wings, he seated himself right regally on the mimic throne, and looked "every inch a king."

"Now!" said he, giving the word of command.

Grattan began to move, but not calmly, with quiet dignity and self-possession, his head erect and his step firm, as he had been told to do; but darting forward with long strides, as if he had been pacing the room to measure it, his hands from habit behind his back, and his head and eyes bent towards the ground.

"D—n it, man!" cried my uncle, "hold up your head. Surely no one had ever more reason to do so than you."

Grattan recommenced. This time he threw his head back as if he had been taking pills—and indeed he was undergoing a course of *steel*—for in another moment the foil got between his ankles, and all but tripped up his heels.

"Well, 'pon my soul, it's too provoking," said my uncle, starting up, and laying his hand upon his arm, to prevent his falling; "who could ever suppose that this was our modern Pericles, who has 'the Goddess Persuasion on his lips?'"

"No, no, my dear Paulett, I shall be quite content if you rank me with Cicero and Demosthenes, and you know they were both very deficient in action."

"But I don't rank you with them, I rank you above them; for they both contended with their peers,

but you have no equal, at least in the senate, so don't go, and disgrace your country at a paltry levee. Quintilian is right, the countenance is of very great power in all we do; and it is difficult to say what a number of motions the hands have without which all action would be maimed, and lame. Remember, too, my dear fellow, the story Tacitus tells us of Vibulenus, the *ci-devant* actor, who when a common soldier in the Pannonian garrisons, merely from the eloquence of his action (for the speech has come down to us, and has nothing in itself) stirred the whole army to mutiny by the narration of the fabricated death of an imaginary brother whom he had never possessed; and you, who possess so much of this eloquence of action in the House of Commons, why cannot you bestow a little of it upon Carlton House?"

"I suppose it is," said Grattan, simply, "because I always have a point to carry, or want something in the one House, while in the other I want nothing."

"I beg your pardon, you'll want incessant watching," laughed my uncle, resuming his seat. "Ahem! attention!" said he, in a drill-sergeant voice, whereupon Grattan, in order to guarantee himself against any further harpooning from his sword, now held it tightly behind his back.

I could not help laughing; and not a little proud of showing that I really did read his speeches, and what was more, understood and remembered them, I said:

“My dear uncle, you frighten one : recollect Mr. Grattan has not been used to live under a stratocracy.”*

“No,” laughed my uncle ; “perhaps he prefers petticoat government, now he has got you for his champion, Mirry.”

The rehearsal then recommenced, I am sorry to say without any visible improvement on the part of the illustrious Tyro, though it lasted about half an hour, till the pupil was obliged to sit down from exhaustion, and the teacher was ready to cry with vexation that his exertions had not been more successful.

“The fact is, my dear Paulett,” said Grattan, as he ungirded the foil, and flung it from him on the sofa, with that degree of joyous eagerness with which one always repudiates a plague of any kind, “the fact is, I cannot pay you so bad a compliment as to mistake you for the Regent ; but you’ll see, when I am in the real presence of his illustrious peruke, I shall do wonders.”

“Not you ; you’ll never be a proficient in the royal game of goose.”

Here the carriage was announced, and the old friends took leave of each other with an *au revoir*,

* This word, which means a military form of government, though it has since found its way into all Dictionaries, was then one of Grattan’s coining. He had issued it from his rich verbal mint in one of his latest speeches ; the one which may be said to have wound up the history of this illustrious statesman to the summit of human eminence.

Grattan giving me another kiss. I never saw him again, but "the man is little to be envied," says Johnson, "whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon; or whose piety would not grow warm amid the ruins of Iona." And in like manner, the heart would be little to be envied, upon which even the briefest contact with the really great, that is the *genuinely good*, did not leave a track of light through all its after-life; for Fourier is right, "*Les attractions sont proportionnelles aux destinées*;" and however humble their exterior position, and however bitter and adverse their worldly fate, those natures which feel the magnetic influence of high and noble minds, have still a happy and a glorious destiny, of which no temporal vicissitudes can deprive them, a city of refuge within, which brings them nearer to God, as it weans them further from earth, like to the monasteries of old, before they had degenerated into the hiding-places of crime and the haunts of profligacy, which were retreats of learning, civilization, and charity. So a heart, peopled with pure memories of the great and good, is to its owner a sanctuary from the dreary ignorance, coldness, and persecutions of the outer world, wherein, despite all human shackles, may be indulged the *deambulatio per amena loca* amid revels at the rich feasts of the generous past, however the shallow and niggardly present, like a Whig ministry, may withhold even the smallest reward from the greatest merit.

Apropos of the poor dear Whigs of the present day; they may be considered the Aragos of politics, keeping on the safe side of the latter, as the distinguished astronomer does on that of science; for his maxim is, *je n'admets pas ce que je ne comprends pas*. Now it is quite evident that the prudent Whigs act upon the same principle; and as they cannot comprehend merit (how should they?) they make a point of never admitting it. If poor Mrs. Waghorn could get it done by subscription (for she never would be able to afford it out of the maid-of-all-work board-wages the Government have so munificently awarded her) I should advise her to have Monsieur Arago's maxim of—

“I do not admit what I cannot comprehend,”

engraved on her husband's tombstone.

The innocent and uninitiated are always marvelling why the shallow charlatanism of the strolling-player's daughter, Lady *****, should be set in in a pension of £300 a-year, and the eminent national services of a Captain Waghorn insulted by a parish allowance of £25 a-year, or ten shillings a-week, to his widow; but then, to be sure, the uninitiated are not aware of how very convenient Lady ***** has been to one or two generations of Whigs. I suppose it was on that account her husband married her, thinking, no doubt, that a crooked wife, like a crooked sixpence, would bring him luck; though, when they were in Paris,

the French used to say of him, touching his wife: "The poor man cannot help being an apothecary, but he really should not drag his drugs about with him." Another *mot* I heard of this old *parvenue* was, that one day she was with her usual scarlet and yellow vulgarity, boasting to a distinguished literary man of all the fine people who disgraced themselves by going to her house;

"On Mondays," said she, "I have my political *soirées*; on Thursdays, my Devonshire House people;" (I suppose of an evening, the *filles-de-chambre* of Devonshire House, like all others, occasionally do get leave to go out!) "and on Saturday," concluded this well-bred lady, "I have my writers."

"I should think," said the witty gentleman, so flatteringly invited, "that Lady ***** will always find it easier to get writers *than readers*."

Blest shade of Henry Grattan, forgive me, that I should have mentioned on the page made sacred by your name, that of a Lady *****!

CHAPTER IX.

MY Aunt Bell, I regret to say, so totally differed from my Aunt Marley about the plan of sending us to school at our age, for the first time, in which we were quite of her opinion, that the day previous to that event, having received a petition from a gouty gentleman in the hotel against the incessant slamming of her bed-room door, she had absconded to another *locanda*, and left us in total ignorance as to her whereabouts. Nevertheless, the terrible next day that we were to go to Miss James's "Establishment," arrived at last; but it was not so much the going there that was so terrible, as the leaving my uncle. Yet how should we ever be able to bear the death of those we love, if absence—its only less cruel deputy—did not in some measure prepare us for it? Still I maintain, that our first serious grief is the worst of all; not only from the heart in youth being infinitely more

tender and susceptible, but because *then* that first grief has the whole heart to itself, and therefore leaves not the smallest fibre unwrung; whereas, in after years, like all other abodes of human misery, that same heart is so densely populated with every species of sorrow and disappointment, that let what fresh agony will arrive, it finds itself so jostled by a crowd of others, that it is fain to wedge itself into its allotted place, and vainly struggles for pre-eminence or precedence: nay, the odds are against its finding a single tear for its use, or a bit of heart (which is the food of affection) left for it to break.

My uncle, with many a sigh, had taken a small house in Lower Berkeley Street. I don't wonder at his sighing, for, truly, there is nothing more vulgarly *mesquine* than the whole style of the general run of small London houses, unless, indeed, it be the minds of their owners. In those days the style of building had not, as now, so uniformly improved; for now, civilization is most sensibly evinced, by building small houses on a large scale, and thereby affording that most to be pitied of all classes—the “poor rich”—the decencies, not to say elegancies of life, upon small means; but then there were but the two extremes of splendour and shabbiness; if you could afford a palace, well and good; if you could not, you had no alternative but a pokey house, as vulgar as supreme bad taste, and our national shopkeeping parsimony, could make it; but as this brick and

mortar hulk was to be papered and painted, and undergo thorough repair, before my poor uncle was drafted into it, he was going, after the London season, to join my aunts in Ireland, in order to escort them back. This only made us feel more completely desolate ; for, with the exception of Mrs. and Miss Waltham, whom we had never seen, but who lived at Fulham, and had promised occasionally to look after us, and Lady Plantagenet, who had done the same, we did not know a soul ; there was not one familiar face for us in all that great Babylon, except, indeed, poor Nelly's ; but putting the snuff out of the question, how were we ever to get to Fleet Street ? and if Nelly came to Miss James's superlatively "*genteel establishment*," it would certainly occasion a fainting epidemic among the young ladies of that emporium of elegance. Altogether it was a terrible morning that 3rd of June, 1816 ; nor was the taking leave of poor Pomba and Fido the least terrible parts of it, for they were now both old dogs, and the light was beginning to leave their eyes, but the love had not left their hearts ; it never does leave a dog's heart but with life. Poor innocent, darling things, they knew well the final separation that was hanging over us, by the manner in which they moaned and trembled ; and though Mor-den promised faithfully to let us know every morning how they were, yet what was to tell them that *they* were remembered, and still loved as fondly as ever, when the assurance was no longer kissed into their

poor darling ears every ten minutes in the day. Of all the many painful mysteries with which life abounds, undoubtedly one of the most painful is the sufferings of animals in one shape or another: I mean of quadrupeds, for they at least, have never sinned.

At length all our miserable arrangements were completed; and Morden announced that my Aunt Marley was in the carriage waiting for us. We had been for the last quarter of an hour alone with my uncle and the two dogs; and now when it came to the last, my uncle's forced gaiety forsook him, and his tears mingled with ours, as he folded us in his arms, blessed us, and told us to be good girls; while the poor dogs, accustomed to share everything we had, scrambled up upon the table, and putting their paws round our necks, licked the tears from our cheeks. It now transpired for the first time, that my uncle had been decidedly averse from this school plan: he had wished us to be sent down to Pembrokehire, to Mrs. Vavasour's, and to have let her choose a governess for us during my aunts' expedition to Ireland, but had as usual been overruled. For it appeared that our cousin, Mary Scott Barry, who was married to an English country-gentleman, of the name of Penrose, and to whom my father had restored the whole of the property which her grandmother Sigismund alienated from her in his favour, had a daughter at Miss James's school; and it was "a poor invention" of my aunts that we should enter the lists with Helen

Penrose, touching her mother's "infamous conduct," (for so they termed it), in accepting a property that she had no right to, and that should in justice at my father's death have reverted to us; therefore, we had her orders to profit by those numerous opportunities afforded in that vulgar quintessence of the larger world—a school—of visiting the sins of the mother upon the child, in every way we could; and so involuntarily do young persons imbibe the prejudices and opinions of those in authority over them, that already we felt an anonymous antipathy for Helen Penrose, merely because my aunts had always despatched her in one of their sweeping clauses, as "a detestable little wretch."

But, with our dear good uncle, the small tributary streams of thoughtful amiability and active kindness were ever flowing into the great Pacific Ocean of his boundless benevolence; and he said to us now for the first time, not to appear to oppose my aunts' sovereign will, and also, that being his parting injunction, it might make the more impression on us.

"Oh, by the bye, I meant to say to you, darlings, with regard to that little Penrose, who will be one of your schoolfellows, it is not her fault, you know, if her mother has behaved unhandsomely in accepting all the property that should one day or other have been yours; so always make a point of being very civil and kind to Helen, unless you find her in herself an unamiable or disagreeable girl, and then keep out

of her way, but do nothing to annoy or provoke her. The most numerous and rancorous enemies we have in the world, after ingrates, are gratuitous ones; but depend upon it, my dear children, it is best to leave all such to God, He will avenge us, sooner or later, more effectually than we can ever avenge ourselves; for He knows far more accurately than we do how much they have sinned against us; besides, should you find yourselves very uncomfortable at this school, Mrs. Vavasour has been ordered to Tunbridge, and you have only to write to her at

‘MYRTLE COTTAGE,

‘THE ROCKS,

‘TUNBRIDGE WELLS,’

and she will either send or come for you, should I not have returned to town:” and here he put a £10 note into each of our hands, which we positively refused, as Grace had £12, and I £10 already. More kisses, more blessings, more tears, more last looks—till it came to the last; and then we found ourselves in the carriage with my Aunt Marley, where we had quickly to dry our tears, which made her exceedingly angry, for she said they evinced such base ingratitude in us, instead of thanking her for the sacrifice she had made in putting us to this school. There is a petrifying power about unfeeling people, which causes the machinery of one’s heart to stand

still as that of a clock does sometimes from intense atmospheric cold; and certain it is that there are persons in whose presence *one cannot even think one's own thoughts*, much less feel one's own feelings, so infectious is their stagnation.

At length, in silence and in sorrow, we arrived before the ponderous gates of Concave House, for by this very appropriate name was Miss James's "Establishment" designated; and truly, nothing could be better calculated to make hollow characters, than were all its superficial and inane arrangements. It was a large, red-brick pile of building, with stone copings, indulging in strange nightmare sort of capers, which burst forth into grotesque nondescript-looking turrets, like aggravated symptoms of that brick-and-mortar scarlatina, which was the prevailing architectural epidemic during the reign of James II. ere it was allayed by a little orange aid: a large, stern-looking stone eagle graced, or rather guarded, each side of the gate, and most formidable they were looking, as if they had birch in their head and grammar in their eye; and verily, the grammar at Concave House must have been in somebody's eye, as it most assuredly never was in anybody's mouth.

In this age of progression Concave House has also progressed; for I understand it has since become a private mad-house, whereas, at that time, it was only an asylum for idiots. Mole looked so melancholy as he pulled the deep-toned bell, that if feelings and

footmen ever went together, I really should have felt sorry even at leaving *him* ; the more so, that it was certainly a good trait in the man's character to seem so sorry to get rid of us, when it is recollected that we had forestalled the treadmill in his individual case, by the incessant journeys, the eternal getting up stairs he had had on our account for the last six years. We had not to wait long after the summons for admission.

As our arrival was evidently expected, and the gates were accordingly opened by the gardener, and as the carriage made the circle of the gravel-sweep up to the house, all sorts and sizes of heads—from the pink top-knotted housemaid's down to the poor miserable, half-fledged raven-looking child's, the last consignment from Calcutta, or Madras—were to be seen stealing furtive glances from behind the blinds of the different windows, which would have almost led the ignorant and uninitiated like ourselves, to suppose that the young ladies at Miss James's "Establishment," like pigeons, had each a separate niche to themselves, which, alas ! was very far from being the case : so much for that eternal difference between realities and appearances. A cherry-cheeked, but somewhat masculine-looking maid, in a pink gingham gown, and a whole forest of green ribbons in her cap, opened the door, and like a genuine *British female*, as she was, seemed most deferentially respectful and attentive to Mole, and was most

empresée to save him (as one of the superior sex), every trouble in taking the small packages out of the carriage.

It is on record that Frederick II. of Prussia, after assisting at the mass of Cardinal Zinzendorf in the church of Breslau, said, that "the Calvinists treat God as an inferior, the Lutherans as an equal, but the Catholics treat Him as God." In like manner, Frenchwomen treat men as their inferiors or slaves, Italian women place them on a footing of equality, but the genuine *British female*, of every class and denomination, treats men as gods, the only visible classicality in their education; this universal man-worship, or *homo-homage*, is no doubt an imitation of the women of ancient Greece, who used also to sacrifice to the infernal gods.

When Jemima, the cherry-cheeked portress of Miss James's "Establishment," had therefore paid every attention and respect to Mole, lightening his labours as much as possible, she turned to my Aunt Marley and said:

"Will you please walk into the parlour, Mum?"

And suiting the action to the word, she placed four fingers (which might at any stall have sold for four radishes) against a door, which pushing open, she said she would let Miss James know. We found ourselves in a large room with a Turkey carpet, the *obligato* War red moreen curtains in black cotton velvet bonds, though the windows looking into the

garden were shaded by a natural drapery of a very luxuriant passi-flora, or passion-flower, then in full bloom; but the inventory we were all tacitly beginning to take of this room was interrupted by our perceiving a young lady of about seventeen seated before a grand piano, on which she was barbarously murdering a few of the wounded at the battle of Prague: had she put them out of their misery at once, it would have been less cruel, but she was so long in deciding whether she should despatch them with a flat or a sharp, or let them die naturally, that the torture (even to our ears) became insupportable.

One thing, however, is quite certain, she could not have been the most distant relation to the young lady who possessed such wonderful musical genius, that in playing "The Storm," she always turned the beer sour in the cellar. She rose at our entrance, and then for the first time, we perceived a *corps de réserve* in the shape of another young lady, about ten years old; notwithstanding the difference of their ages, they were both dressed alike, that is with white cross-barred cambric muslin frocks made tight up to their throats, with very shabby shoes rather down at the heel; their hair, which was of the brightest red, they wore in curls round their necks *à l'enfant*; but considering they had just retreated from "The Battle of Prague," it was natural they should have their fire-locks on their shoulders. My Aunt Marley, who had very good manners when her temper did not interfere with them, now accosted this pair

(who were preparing for flight) in the most gracious tone possible, saying :

“ Pray don't let us frighten you away, we are so fond of music ; and I think you will find my two nieces, upon further acquaintance, tolerably good musicians.”

Not a syllable in reply from the two flamingoes. My Aunt Marley perceiving at once that she would have to make the whole outlay for the conversation, valiantly returned to the charge.

“ I fear you were practising, and that we have interrupted you ?”

“ Oh ! no, um, I'd done,” stammered the largest carrot at last, backing all the while towards the door.

“ Are you fond of music ?” asked I of the smaller one ; but less fortunate even than my Aunt Marley, this young lady vouchsafed no reply, but hiding her head behind her sister's back in a way that made one fear the frock would the next moment be in flames, she began to giggle, when vigorously and suddenly towed by her elder sister, they made a bolt for the door, and had no sooner reached the hall than we heard a loud laugh. This certainly was not a very attractive *affiche* for the elegance of Miss James's “ Establishment.”

The coast being now clear, we once more began to look around us ; the first thing that struck me was, the over population of little card-board hand-screens, portraits of divers bunches of grapes, and bunches of flowers, no doubt the production of “ the young ladies ;” upon the mantel-piece, which was high, were

various hyacinth-glasses and bulbs, in card-board pillories of pink and gold paper; also several weeping willows of green, blue, pink, and yellow silver papers; ultimately intended for *allumettes*. While over the mantel-piece was a fine portrait in oil of the tutelary deity of the place, Miss James herself. She was represented in the costume she always wore, which consisted of an insertion lace scull-cap, much resembling the shape of an egg; a piece of black velvet round her forehead, and tufts of little flat ring-like curls on each side, her hair being of a dark drab colour like her complexion; her eyes of a light greenish-grey, particularly cool-looking and refreshing in summer. Her nose would have made an admirable politician, as it did not pledge itself to any particular line; her mouth also would have done for a patriot, as it boldly went from one extreme to the other; the *Sartor Resartus* was not then written, or else its clever author might have had a chapter modelled on Salisbury plain, with Stonehenge left out, to describe Miss James's dress; for there was certainly nothing stupendous about it, as it consisted of a plain—very plain—white cambric muslin dress, more proper than picturesque, made tight up to the throat, with a short waist and long tight sleeves. Miss James was further represented sitting very perpendicularly in an arm-chair, a book open in her hand, and her eyes steadily fixed upon an “invisible” girl, whose lesson she was *supposed* to be hearing.

The *accessoires* of the picture consisted of a pair of globes on a table in the background; "The Morning Post," and a glass of water with one cabbage-rose and a bachelor's button in it. On the wall opposite this Kit-cat hung another, of a red-faced looking personage, in male attire, with a blue coat and gilt buttons, a beaver glove on one hand, while in the other he held a newspaper, which appeared to divide his attention with a glass of brandy and water (painted with great *spirit*) that stood on a table covered with a green-baize cloth, beside him. In the corner of this portrait was written in large gold Roman letters—

"MY DEAR FATHER, SEPTEMBER 29TH, 1803."

No doubt a touching instance of Miss James's filial affection; while under this picture was one of a young lady about two years old, in a lace cap and blue ribbons, distributing her hands and feet (the latter in red shoes, the former in red flesh) over a field of buttercups.

"I wonder whose picture this is?" said I, looking at it.

"No doubt 'my dear father's,' when he was a little girl," rejoined Grace, laughing.

Under this picture was a kind of procrustes bed of a hard square sofa, and before it a Pembroke table, upon which was a large Tunbridge workbox, with a large Bible on one side, and "Debrett's Peerage" on the other, bound uniform, as they generally are in most English people's minds. I had forgotten to

mention, that on each side of the fireplace were two rickety, black mahogany screens, supported on a claw of three talons, the top or screen part being in the form of a shield or escutcheon, composed of white satin, which now began to look very bilious from the accumulated late hours of many years; for one was a most elaborate sampler, which, besides all the letters in the alphabet (at least), and a goodly array of recruits from the multiplication-table, which however were cut off in the bloom of their youth, for they did not reach to twenty, there was a very splendid house of red silk bricks, with a flight of grey silk steps coming down to a beautifully rural green silk lawn, laid out in the Dutch style, with finely intersected gravel-walks, graphically simulated in orange silk. The whole was enclosed in a magic circle of posts and chains, while, like the cherubim at the gates of Eden, stood two round powder puff-shaped green silk trees, pouting in all directions, with fine ripe, red silk cherries, and a flaming parrot (not sword) perched on the top of each of them; while, according to the sensible custom of the old masters, the artist's name appeared in the corner, and was proclaimed by the verdant and roseate hues of pink and green sewing silk to be no less a personage than "Priscilla Penelope James," to which was added the date of "May the 15th, 1770."

The other screen, which was the same in shape and material, was nevertheless of a higher grade of art, as it combined painting, as well as needle-work. The

subject was at first rather puzzling, as it consisted of a ruin executed in Indian ink, which seemed to deplore its fate in every crevice, as it looked despairingly adown a gloomy plain, also in Indian ink; while here and there a gnarled oak, broken and withered, but with a still ample foliage of green and brown silk leaves and acorns, seemed proudly endeavouring to assert its superiority over some "tall bully" of a poplar; while to this uninviting scene a gentleman in a bag wig, yellow silk coat, plum-coloured unmentionables, splendid Dresden lace *jabot* (in real lace, however it got there), flesh-coloured silk stockings, *marquisite* sword-hilt, and knee-buckles, with his arms spread out, warring with the air, as if he had been playing at blind-man's-buff, not professionally *pro bono publico*, but all by himself, as an amateur, wholly and solely for his own amusement; however, the following lines from Parnell, embroidered underneath in roses and forget-me-nots, explained the mystery:

" The story told, Sir Topaz mov'd
 (The youth of Edith erst approv'd)
 To see the revel scene :
 At close of eve he leaves his home,
 And wends to find the ruined dome
 All on the gloomy plain."

While we were still laughing at Sir Topaz, the door opened, and Miss James herself made her appearance, which was precisely that of her portrait, only with the

addition of a large square sarcophagus-looking brooch, set round with pearls at her throat, containing a plait of light hair, that looked exceedingly like a door-mat; her dress terminated in a broad hem, and herself in a pair of tea-coloured boots, laced up the front; while in her hand, she carried a small West Indian basket, in which were a bunch of keys, a letter, and a pocket-handkerchief; in her wake followed another female form, also "robed in white," and similarly booted and basketed, only no cap, but a very rough, dry-looking wig of great probity and moral courage, as it made not the slightest attempt to pass for anything *but a wig*, or to deny that it was a chip of the old block from whence it had sprung.

This lady was thickly pitted with the small-pox, and was moreover so exceedingly rubicund, that she would have looked jovial, but for that *nolo mi tangere* freezing-machine air, which all *British females*, (more especially governesses) confound with being lady-like, not that this said freezing apparatus of manner ever in the long run prevents their running into the most vulgar familiarity, or taking the most unpardonable liberties.

"Ahem! my friend, Miss Omeny," said Miss James, waving her hand in the direction of her companion by way of introduction, as they both seated themselves, and began perilously balancing themselves at the edges of their chairs, as if further back there had been a *chevaux-de-frise* of spring guns and steel

traps, or, to say the least of it, a bed of nettles, and which, like those delusive pleasures from which it was Miss James's vocation to teach her pupils to fly, would have been sure "to leave a sting behind."

In proportion as well-bred persons put you immediately at your ease, so under-bred ones have the unhappy art of making you feel as awkward, as embarrassed, and as uncomfortable as themselves; so that the sedentary martyrdom Miss James and Miss Omeny were apparently enduring, even subdued my Aunt Marley, who, not very well knowing how to steer towards the North Pole, broke the ice by saying:

"I am afraid we frightened those young ladies away who were playing when we came in."

"Oh! no, em; it was time for them to go to their French class."

I here had occasion "mentally to ejaculate"—as the 'Minerva Press' novels say—"How odd! We have only heard the sound of three persons' voices since we entered this house, namely, the maid's, the red-haired warriors of 'The Battle of Prague,' and Miss James's own frigid zone, and yet we have had three different *patois* for the monosyllable ma'am: *mum*, *um*, and *em*!"

My aunt, having taken courage, next proceeded to give Miss James a catalogue *raisonné*, or rather *dé-raisonné*, of all my high crimes and misdemeanours; for, perhaps with that purblind self-delusion to which we are all prone, I certainly did not recognise myself

in the remorseless monster my Aunt Marley described—all on account of my fatal talent for mimicry—which, at all events, she had contributed to cultivate by the constant exhibitions she had endeavoured to make me give of it. But that was nothing. I was so used to her exaggerations of my most trifling faults, that had she accused me of murder, I should not have condescended to contradict her, as her tirades had always the effect of hardening and petrifying every spring of my heart at its very source, and, had it not been for the all-vivifying influence—the eternal sunlight and genial warmth of our dear, kind uncle's universal nature, which, like his great prototype in the planetary sphere, equally conveyed health and bloom to the humblest flower, or brilliancy to the most costly gem, without ever endowing the one to the neglect of the other—I might have been all my Aunt Marley tried so indefatigably to make me. Poor Grace, however, was not so stoical on these occasions as I was, and now, bursting into tears, said:

“ Oh! pray, Aunt Marley, don't say such things! you will make Miss James think I don't know what of Miriam; and, so far from being ill-natured, as you would make any one believe, she is the most good-natured person I ever knew: only Mirry is like Uncle Paulett,—she never *talks* even to me; she never makes promises or professions, but she is always *doing* something that will please, serve, or agreeably surprise me; and, what is better, she never alludes to, or thinks

anything of what she does—it is only by accident one finds it out—and every one says the same who knows her. For my own part, I hate talk. If that would do one any good, one might keep a parrot, and teach it all the fine sentiments and professions of regard possible.”

“Tais-toi, Jean-Jacques, on ne te comprend pas,” said I, as I had often heard Mademoiselle de Guilleragues say, and I pressed Grace’s hand as I added, in a low voice: “Don’t you know I’m an eel, child? and skinning is nothing when one is used to it.”

“It is astonishing,” said my aunt, now turning to Miss James, with one of her radiant smiles, “how fond Grace is of her sister:—she thinks her perfection!”

And, indeed, it was astonishing, considering the seeds of envy, hatred, and malice my aunts had so unsparingly tried to sow between us, or rather it would have been astonishing, but that “Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God alone giveth the increase,” and, more blessed than all, He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, often neutralizes the poison to the badly-trained child; for the heart and mind that are warped even by the worst education, and the most pernicious examples, depend upon it, *never were straight*; bad education may, and unquestionably does, engender bad habits, and faults of manner and temper; but a good heart is like real religion, for the one to be good, and the other to be

genuine, God must be the centre of each; and as every aspiration of a sincere piety ascends to him, so do the concrete impulses of an upright heart emanate from Him. In vain, then, will faulty training and pernicious influences, like dense clouds, cast their murky shadows; if the pure light is but there, it *will* shine out at last. Alas! that in some hearts this Divine light should not exist, but in its stead a moral nebula, which all the bright host of Heaven only serves to discover, without ever for a moment penetrating or filling its dark, barren, and mysterious void!

Oh! it is a fearful and bewildering thought to speculate on *how* the Avenging Angel may fill such vacuums at crack of doom, when the last sand shall have fallen from the glass of Time, and he himself creation's patriarch! floats a pale corse upon eternity's unfathomed sea—that sea which never gives up its dead!

My Aunt Marley next proceeded to express to Miss James her despair at the smallness of our appetites, and also a hope that the air of Kensington might be beneficial in augmenting them. To which Miss James replied, in a voice so piano as to be almost inaudible, although there was no gallery, that "*her* young ladies never complained of want of appetite;" and, indeed, she had never made a truer statement, for there was a plentitude of appetite at Concave House, I might say a surplus, so that it was only of want of food that the girls sometimes complained; but, upon

all such occasions, Miss James took the opportunity of practically illustrating to them how perfectly unavailing every sort of complaint is in this world. At length, having said everything she thought necessary, my aunt rose to take leave, as she intended going on to Brandenburgh House, to see the Margravine of Anspach, who was then in England, during one of her short flittings, previously to her return to Naples; for that mercurial old gentlewoman used to fly about Europe then, as the cholera, revolutions, and the sea-serpent, do now, leaving quite as many wonderful tales behind her as any of them, not excepting the tail of the sea-serpent.

It was not till the last sound of the carriage-wheels had died away, and Miss James had put out her hand with a flourish to escort Grace up stairs, while Miss Omeny performed the same ceremony towards me, that we felt really and helplessly alone; I verily believe that a strange paradise, till the first bloom of it had become familiar, would be an uncomfortable place; judge then of the cold, petrified, prim, double-distilled strangeness of an English boarding-school, as they were in the year 1816, for I hear they are totally different now; however, I never believe even half that I hear.

It was the month of June, and the weather was unusually warm, still the very marrow in my bones seemed to freeze as the sound of my aunt's chariot-wheels died away; in short, though I have never been

a poodle, at least, not to the best of my recollection, and have never been shaved, except by hotel and lodging-house keepers, I am sure that the chilled nature of my moral sufferings on that occasion must have geometrically corresponded with the physical shiverings of those poor animals, when they undergo the tonsure for the first time, on a gusty day in March; the fact is, the proceeding was a most cruel one: we were too old at sixteen and fourteen to take a plunge into the frozen ocean of boarding-school life, for our psychological muscles and fibres become rigid and unpliant infinitely sooner than our physical ones, and it is far greater torture to totally change the habits and element of persons at a certain age, than it would be to try and twist old muscles and sinews into the elasticity of an opera-dancer.

However, it was some sort of relief on our way up stairs to find that neither Miss James's nor Miss Omeny's lungs were in that enfeebled state which their *sotto voce* monosyllabic conference with my Aunt Marley would have led one to suppose; for they now distributed several scoldings to stray maid-servants, *en route* to the school-room, in a voice which, for strength and shrillness, would have done credit to an hereditary parrot celebrating its third jubilee. Miss James appeared greatly scandalized at our tears, or rather sobs, for she said, previously to throwing open the school-room door, and turning us into the pound with the other calves and donkeys:

“Hush! I must have those tears dried. *My young ladies* never cry; no weeping is allowed here, except to the willows in the garden.”

I afterwards learned that every new arrival was treated to this bucolic piece of sentiment, which, nevertheless, and notwithstanding its poetical and metaphorical tone, contained the one great fact in English female education; for at Miss James’s “Establishment” the young ladies were duly taught on all and every occasion to suppress their feelings till they had none left to suppress, and had attained to that pitch of sublime apathy which cares for no one, or nothing, beyond *self*, which is considered the *beau ideal* of the “lady-like” in England. There was also the orthodox quantum of what Carlyle so happily terms “that misdirected industry which is seen vigorously enough thrashing mere straws;” for much and regular labour was expended by the young ladies at Concave House, in learning to mispronounce French and Italian, and malign English, with infinite researches too into the mysteries of coloured crewels and tinted papers, by which alone they gave evidence of their disinterested generosity of character, as these things could never, by any accident, be of the slightest use to them in any possible revolution of after-life.

When Miss James threw open the school-room door, the *tableau* displayed an awkward squad of some thirty or six-and-thirty girls—for the latter was the

real number—from the ages of seventeen to seven. These were now standing in classes of ten, more or less, on one leg, with one shoulder out of their frocks, and their hands behind their backs, before their respective benches at the lower end of the room; while at the upper end, at each side of the fireplace, were two small square tables, behind one of which sat a very fat woman, called the Italian governess, though she was English, but said to have married an Italian, and therefore designated as Signora Beccaccia. She was flanked by a very thin, red-nosed English governess, a Miss Flippins, who sat beside her, not exactly like Thais beside Alexander, for she had no resemblance whatever to a “blooming Eastern bride,” but a very strong one to a sharp knife, ready to dissect the plump woodcock on her right.

Behind the other table (which was also covered with green cloth, like a conjuror’s—though, Heaven knows, *they* were no conjurors!) sat two more teachers; one avowedly English, a Miss Sharpe; the other, though in reality a Miss Humphries, the daughter of a respectable grocer in Holborn, was called, by particular desire, “the French teacher,” for which no doubt her father’s dealings in French plums peculiarly qualified her; and she was further travestied into Mademoiselle de Montmorency. These little liberties with historical facts Miss James justified, by the universal prejudice then reigning in England against the immorality of French governesses. The

English were wrong, as, notwithstanding their infallibility, they are very apt to be; for at that time the French governesses to be had were women not only of the highest family, but of the greatest moral worth and most extensive acquirements, who educated the hearts and dispositions of their pupils, although they were guilty of, at the same time, cultivating their manners, those “outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace” of moral rectitude; though in England, I believe, good manners are considered next a-kin to impropriety; at least one would infer this from the vile bad manners, or at best the total want of manner, among all classes in this country, from the superior man and woman who never read novels, down to the inferior ones who read nothing else.

Now there is a rage for French and Swiss (which are by far the worst of the two) governesses, and yet the prejudice against them would be much better founded now than it was then; as now they are generally not only persons of faulty education themselves, low birth, and vulgar minds and habits, but, nine times out of ten, having no characters to lose, have none to maintain. It is no doubt this heterogeneous and ill-assorted species of education which is the cause of our national *modo vastator*—for English people as little understand the philosophy of manner as they do of dress; and it is for this reason that we so often see a *levée en masse* of all the colours of the rainbow in

one unfortunate *British female's* costume or white stockings, with a black dress! and unmarried girls in velvet and jewels; and quite as often by way of having a manner of some sort, the same unmarried girls with all the off-hand patronizing *aplomb* of a married woman, or the unabashed *minauderie* of a veteran coquette, which is even more offensive than the orthodox national freezing-machine, milk and water, inane tariff of lady-like bearing.

But I must not any longer leave the young ladies at Concave House, standing on one leg, like tired geese after a long day's march towards the London market. When we arrived, it appeared they were conjugating the verb *avoir*—to have; though we did not immediately recognise the name of our old acquaintance in the following reiterated sounds:

<i>Jay,</i>	I have.
<i>Too ah,</i>	Thou hast.
<i>Ill ou elle ah,</i>	He or she has.
<i>Nous ev-vonge,</i>	We have.
<i>Vous e-vay,</i>	You have.
<i>Ills ou elles own,</i>	They have.
<i>J'avvy,</i>	I had.
<i>Too avvy,</i>	Thou hadst.
<i>Ill avvy,</i>	He had.
<i>Nous aviong,</i>	We had.
<i>Vous aviez,</i>	You had.
<i>Ills ou elles avret (avaient),</i>	They had.

For such was the Concave House edition of this notorious verb, by which it certainly might have escaped detection from the combined vigilance of the European police, even had every member of it been a Vidocq.

No sooner, however, had Miss James opened the door, than she announced to the assassins of the French Grammar, that they were to have a half-holiday on account of our arrival; whereupon some of the younger girls gave a few natural bounds across the room, for which, of course, they were instantly checked, and mulcted of two hours' play, to learn a double lesson, to be either fifty lines out of "Thomson's Seasons," or three pages of "Rasselas," whichever their own judgment might deem the least suicidal.

This sentence passed, we were formally presented to all the teachers, Madame Beccacia and Mademoiselle de Montmorency receiving orders always to address us either in French or Italian; but, like the dunce who could read out of no book but his own, strain our powers of divination and attention as we would, we never could understand a word they said; while they, notwithstanding their foreign cognomens, were so truly patriotic, that they were always correcting in us, poor dear Mademoiselle de Guilleagues' Parisian French, and the Abbate Assai's Tuscan Italian. And so people go through the world nominally speaking the same language, and yet eternally falling out, *faute de s'entendre*.

While the ceremony of introduction was taking

place between the governesses and ourselves, the elder girls had gathered round, and stared at us as if we had been two hippopotami just imported, which perceiving, we bowed to them in a circular direction, so as to include them all in the salutation; but instead of returning it, they only began to whisper and giggle, and nudge each other, which we thought extremely ill-bred, but for which, however, Miss James never corrected them, or the teachers either, because, as we afterwards understood, it was a half-holiday, and the young ladies had a right to do what they liked, as long as they did not make a noise. While they were still staring at us in a manner that brought the tears into Grace's eyes, and the blood into my cheeks, a bell rang, which warned the young ladies that it was time to change their frocks for dinner, especially as Jemima, the buxom maid, accompanied by a coadjutrix in pink ribbons, now appeared to lay the cloth; whereupon all the young ladies paired off with an alacrity that showed meals were more attended to than manners at Concave House, which was evincing a very undue partiality, for, in point of scarcity, the latter even exceeded the former.

At this signal Miss James, and Miss Omeny, who never dined with us (sensible women) vanished by a side-door into another room; and as the teachers followed their pupils, we were left to follow them, which, not doing immediately, on reaching the landing, we were looking about, not knowing which way to go,

for there were two staircases only divided by a door, and a small passage. While still in this dilemma, a very nice-looking little girl (in a clean white frock, and a coral necklace, with a beautiful skin and complexion, though not much colour, sunny brown hair, parted on her forehead, and large, honest, affectionate-looking hazel eyes) about nine years old, came swinging down the great staircase, and making a magnificent cheese at every landing, till suddenly perceiving us, she stopped, coloured slightly, and then coming towards us, without, however, either laughing or giggling, said:

“ Shall I show you the way upstairs?”

“ Thank you, dear; we shall be very much obliged to you,” said we, holding out our hands to her, which she took.

As we all ascended the stairs together, the little girl turned round, and said to us:

“ My cousins, the Sedleys, were to come here to-day; are you they?”

“ We are.”

“ Oh, I am so glad!” said she, clapping her hands with an earnestness that would most unquestionably have entailed a strong dose of Thomson or “Ras-selas,” upon her, had it been seen.

“ And why are you so glad?”

“ Oh, because I like you, and because my mamma says your papa has been very kind to her; and I was to love you.”

"Then you are little Helen Penrose?" said I, kissing her.

"No, big Helen Penrose," said she, laughing, "for Uncle Scott Barry always calls me the Newfoundland pup; he says I am so big, so I'll be your dog while you are at school; may I?"

"Yes, that you may; only you know, if you are my dog, you'll have to fetch and carry, and I don't know how much kissing to endure, for I am so fond of dogs, and have two such darling ones at home," and here I again began to cry, thinking of poor Pomba and Fido, to say nothing of his master.

"Are you Grace or Miriam?" asked Helen, throwing her arms round my neck, and taking up the skirt of her as yet unsullied frock to dry my eyes.

"I'm Miriam."

"Then, Miriam, you must not cry, for do you know they won't let one cry, or laugh, or do anything one likes here."

"Oh, yes, they will. Let you, and Grace, and I, be very good friends, Helen: they can't prevent that."

"No, indeed they can't," said she, again affectionately kissing both me and Grace, which last kiss brought us into a dormitory with some ten or twelve little white dimity curtained beds, evidently modelled upon the scene in "*Les Petites Danaïdes*," after the

one in which Monsieur Surnois, that model of fathers, says to his daughters—

“Mes chères amies, faites-moi l’amitié de tuer vos maris.”

To which, not being able to refuse so good a father such a trifle, they immediately consent, with the exception of Hypermnestra, who I suppose was a great florist, and so had no fancy for weeds. Out of this room Helen led us into an inner one, infinitely smaller, where, upon a marble-slab, with a fountain above it, swelled a republic of delft wash-hand-basins, while round this room hung a legion of coarse towels with black initials upon a square piece of white painted wood above each: they looked as if they had done sufficient duty at least for one day. “There,” said Helen, pointing to two unused huckabacks, “there are your towels, and take care you always put them up so as they don’t blow down, for when they do, Miss James always makes us pay a forfeit of twopence, as most of us have only sixpence a week, these forfeits (for she has them for everything, if we go home on Saturday for instance, and don’t go to church with the school, there is another twopence); seldom leave us more than a penny each week, and we are always in debt to the cake-woman.”

“Well, but don’t your mamma allow you this pocket-money?” said I.

“Oh! yes; but Miss James pays it to all the girls, and puts it down in the bill.”

I soon discovered, to my cost, that the “Concave House” exchequer was precisely on the footing that Helen had stated, that is, that Miss James punctually charged the parents these sixpences, shillings, or half-crowns a-week, according to their stipulated allowance, but, thanks to her financial system of imposts (*alias* forfeits) worthy of “the heaven-born minister” himself, she seldom disbursed more than a tithe of these monies to their nominal owners.

“What are you waiting for?” asked Helen, seeing that we still remained inactive.

“For the maid to come and pour out the water,” said I.

“Oh!” said Helen, laughing, as she went over to the slab, pushed a basin under the fountain, and turned on the water, “we have no maids here; we are obliged to do everything for ourselves.”

“Oh! that we are used to; our governess always made us dress and undress ourselves, and fold up, and put by our own things at night; only the housemaids used to pour out the water for us, and all that sort of thing, and fill the bath night and morning.”

“There are no baths here to fill,” said Helen.

“Well, but,” interposed Grace, “how long they must be one after another washing at night, and in the morning, if there is no other dressing-room but this!”

"There is one other: but they don't wash one after another,—half-a-dozen wash at the same time."

"How disgusting!" said Grace.

But we soon discovered that a little washing, like a little learning, went a great way with the young ladies at Miss James's "Establishment," and that they had not such universal ideas upon that subject as we had.

"What are you looking for? There's the soap," cried Helen, pushing over a piece of mottled abomination, that looked like a block of Stilton cheese.

"I was looking for the almond paste."

"The what! oh! I know; mamma uses it for her hands."

"And don't they use it here?"

"Not they!" said Helen, laughing.

Poor Aunt Marley! how kind these cold, niggardly school deficits made even you appear. Where was that delicious brown soap, like a conserve of flowers, of Rigges's? where his fragrant almond paste, worthy of Venus herself? and his still more fragrant extract of roses for washing and beautifying the hair (as it really does), making the air ambrosial with its breath, that you were so particular we never should be without, and for which, among many others, our dear good uncle had to pay such large bills at Christmas? Where, indeed? I know not: I only know they were not at "Concave House,"—at least, till our things were unpacked; and then, how we were laughed at by "the young ladies"

of Miss James's "Establishment" for using what they, in the plethora of their vulgarity, of course called "*scent!*" and doubtless many a self-styled superior mind will join them in their laugh, for there is a certain class of persons, educated in coarse, not to say nasty, habits, who think it a proof of a strong mind to despise what they call externals, whereas, whatever spurious genius may make poets, painters, and musicians, or however some great unwashed, or little uncombed, may get entangled in the thickets of a Black Forest of incomprehensible German metaphysics, till they fancy themselves philosophers, they may rest assured that there can be no really fine texture of mind without refinement of habit, that is, without an attention to, instead of a neglect of, externals, for the shadow in all things evidences the substance.

A real gentleman or lady would cheerfully submit, if needs must be, to dining off dry bread; but they could not eat venison off a dingy cloth, with dim plate and glass. Not so, your coarse minded, self-superior persons. Quantity is everything with them, quality nothing. A Mrs. Simpkins would not care how scant or how common her under-garments were, as long as she appeared at church in a silk gown and showy bonnet; whereas, a Lady Edith would never dream of being ashamed of the cheapest dresses, or the plainest bonnet; but then, her linen, stockings, gloves, and *lingerie* would be sure to be both fine and plentiful; and oh! horrible extravagance! one of her pocket-

handkerchiefs, in all probability, cost more than Mrs. Simpkins's fine gown and bonnet put together; for the latter is real, and the former spurious. Refinement deals in realities; vulgarity in imitation and assumption. There is, in fact, as wide a difference between the one and the other, as there is between the Pantheonism of *talked* Philanthropy, and *practised* Gospel of real Benevolence.

Presently, a din rose on the air, as if the echo of a mosaic of human voices had floated down from the Tower of Babel. It was "the young ladies" dressing in the next room. It appeared they did not trouble the soap and water during this noon-day operation. When we joined them, and "Jemima" had excavated two evening frocks for us, we again found ourselves the *point de mire*. It is true, that our dresses were open to criticism, for, though of fine Indian muslin, trimmed with very costly Mechlin lace, yet both would have been the better for a little mending; whereas the "young ladies" at "Concave House" had one and all clean, white checked, muslin frocks, with plain tucks in them, and no adornment whatever, save that of being in thorough repair. They also wore unanimously either coral, or red cornelian necklaces, with the exception of the Miss Sherwoods, the heroines of "The Battle of Prague," who wore white ones, as a pleasing relief to their hair.

Luckily for us, the second dinner-bell now rang; I say luckily, for, had we remained up-stairs ten minutes

longer, under the piercing glances of "the young ladies," I am certain our unhappy frocks would have been riddled through with additional holes. It was a great relief, as well as protection, that Helen sat next to us at dinner. Novelty is said to have charms; but this, like every other general rule, has its exceptions; and certainly the novelty of eating for the first time off white, delft plates, with steel forks, was one of its most striking, and least pleasing exceptions. I was the more surprised at this, as Miss James had announced that every young lady brought a silver fork and spoon with them to school, and we had brought half-a-dozen, bought on purpose for us by our dear, kind uncle, and marked with our initials, as well as two little silver tankards, which, however, with the spoons and forks, were also invisible, as down the table were a range of blue, delft mugs, half full of water, which really was a cruel stint, considering the hydrophobia heat of the weather, for Helen informed us that, let nature demand it as she might, we were never allowed more. By the side of each mug was a little, attenuated piece of bread, and, as if there had not been ugly mugs enough down the table, two teachers sat at the head, and two at the foot. Before these teachers were two great straw mats; between every six or seven girls was a white, delft salt-cellar, with a bone salt-spoon in it, for which an incessant squabble among the sixes and sevens was kept up during dinner, and formed an animated substitute for conversation.

For the curious in gastronomy, I give the *menu du dîner*. Unlike all others, in a school dinner, the sweet things take precedence of the viands. This I understood was to damp the appetite, and really, if such were the intention, it was a most merciful one. On the day of our arrival, the *soi-disant plat doux* consisted of what looked like a very large snow-ball, which Helen explained to me was boiled rice, without sugar, milk, lemon-peel, or any foreign adjunct. A small flake of this, Madame Beccaccia put on every plate, and then, from a sauce-tureen, poured over it a spoonful of some glutinous sort of liquid, that looked most suspiciously like paste for pasting paper on a wall. As, not being a genius, I never attempt to speak of what I know nothing about, I can only describe the culinary curiosity as Alphonse Kar does in that charming little book of his, “*Un voyage autour de mon jardin*,” the leek tarts they gave him in Picardy: “*En Picardie*,” says he, “*on m’a servi des tartes aux poireaux ; ce serait très mauvais—si on en pouvait manger !*”

In like manner, I am sure this boiled snowball with paste sauce would have been execrable, if one could have eaten it. At the foot, was an ordinary sized leg of mutton, about ten pounds, and a dish of potatoes. Curran used to say, “that a barber always began by shaving a beggar, even if he ended by shaving a duke.” Now I don’t know whether Mademoiselle de Montmorency (*alias* Humphries), ever further transmigrated into a barber, but this I can with truth aver, that

if she did, *she began* by shaving a leg of mutton, as the humane reader will readily believe, when he or she bears in mind, that there were thirty-five girls, with perfectly gladiatorial appetites, besides the four teachers, and yet learns that this miraculous leg of mutton not only dined (or rather was accused of dining) us all, but actually made its appearance cold the next day to repeat the same phenomenon.

It is true, that the four teachers supped with Miss James and Miss Omeny, and there is no knowing how independent they may have made themselves of this diet, which was not even that of Poland, but worse still, of Hung(a)ry.

The next *tour de force* was Miss Flippens and the potatoes, one of which she carefully, and with almost geometrical precision, divided into four, giving a fourth part to each young lady as her share; and don't let the speculative reader for a moment suppose, (I say speculative, because this *modicum* of potatoe will doubtless remind him of railway shares *sauté à la Hudson*), or still less conclude, that Miss James imported her potatoes from Brobdignag. No such thing, they were the mere ordinary sized potatoes grown in the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

This "solemn fast" was held every day at two o'clock; while at six, very different and most tantalizing culinary odours pervaded the house from Miss James's own dinner, as it appeared that she preferred celebrating the festivals ordained by the Church; but

though Church and State are inseparable in England, our state was most deplorable. I had never been to Vauxhall then, and homœopathy was at that time unheard of in England, so that I had never seen even ham cut so thin, much less such infinitesimal particles of roast mutton distributed before.

“Oh! that Gifford’s Soul” had formed the blade, and “Jeffries’ Quill” the edge of the carving knives at “Concave House,” that they might have cut up the joints as unsparingly as if they had all been standard works as yet unbacked by name or fame, when at the expiration of a quarter of an hour Jemima removed with a jerk the empty sarcophagus that had contained the potatoes, and bore off in triumph that real *pièce de résistance*, the leg of mutton, which had so wonderfully resisted the sharp gnawings of forty appetites, and the equally keen glances of eighty eyes. Madame Beccaccia elegantly knocking on the table with the handle of her knife, (which indeed otherwise would have had a sinecure), said in a loud voice:

“Young ladies, say grace.”

And I was much surprised to hear, that the formula of this thanksgiving was:

“For what we have received, the Lord make us truly thankful.”

But having been brought up to tell the truth, *coûte qu’il coûte*, I involuntarily changed it to:

“For that which we have *not* received, O Lord, make us truly resigned;” which poor little grain of truth,

however, like many others, was not detected amid the numerous falsehoods amongst which it was wedged.

Dinnner over, (since such they were agreed to call it), it being a half-holiday, we were allowed to repair to the garden, which we never went beyond, except of a Saturday, when we were regularly marched to Chiswick and back, why, Heaven only knows, except it was that it made us so tired, we could not even eat the very small quantum of food we were allowed to discuss; but this being only Friday, the garden, which was really a nice one, with a pretty piece of water, was our boundary.

There certainly must be a strong sympathy between gingerbread and grammar, although, perhaps, it is an over-dose of the former that prevents young ladies and young gentlemen from properly digesting the latter; but certain it is, that this sort of magnetic attraction exists between them; for it is astonishing how intuitively the cake-woman, always appended to a school, knows when a new customer hovers about the treacle of her horizon, and nears the pole of her barley-sugar, or the arctic regions of her almond comfits.

Mrs. Quince, the tart-woman of Concave House, (though no relation to Peter Quince), was really a comely-looking dame, in a bright-red cloak and black silk Bath market-woman's sort of gipsy hat, and the summit of *Mont Blanc* was not whiter than the linen that lined her basket, which was not only exceedingly becoming to the cakes, comfits, and occasional pears

and plums, that it contained, but considerably expedited their sale, by making them look more *appétissant*.

Scarcely had we been five minutes in the garden, before Mrs. Quince made her appearance, as if she had really been waiting behind the scenes ready to come on; and she certainly was "well up" in her part, as she knew the taste of every individual girl in the school, from the youngest Miss Sherwood's political mania for "Parliament," and her sisters' unhappy passion for caraway comfits, up to Madame Beccaccia's secret sighs for peppermint lozenges.

Still I remarked, as she came curtsying down the gravel walk, generously offering her basket with unlimited credit to each and to all, first one head was mournfully shaken and turned away, and then another, so that the basket, in its progress, remained undiminished. I then remembered what Helen Penrose had told us about Miss James's mortgages on the weekly shillings and sixpences, which she was always foreclosing; and, Heaven forgive me! but I now thought these heavy fines went to pay the butcher's bill, which must have been a very light one, although meat was then a shilling a pound.

"And what can I tempt you with to-day, my pretty young ladies?" asked Mrs. Quince, curtsying up to me and Grace. "I never wants to be paid until such times as it is quite convenient to a young lady's own feelings. I've not been in the trade thirty year, a

serving on the very first 'Establishments,' both has regards male and female eddication, without knowing that both young ladies' and young gemlen's arts is often fuller than their pussess, or their stomachs, poor dears, praps hemtier nor heither, no disparagement to their masters and missusses, who of course knows best; so what shall it be, my dears? you see I have a good choice,—plain buns, Bath buns, queen cakes, as really is fit for any queen, though I say it as shouldn't say it, maids of honour; but as I told the young genlmen at Dr. Classic Gander's just now, I should be deceiving on 'em, if I didn't tell them that they were stale; sponge cakes, quite fresh *they* be, lots of parliament, but that never does nobody no good, so I never recommends it, though it is agin my own hintrest. Then in confectionary, there's kisses, almond and caraway comfits, barley sugar and bull's eyes, and double peppermints to-day, the fat Tallian governess, Madam Beckacakezon, she's particklar partial to them, *she* is."

"How much does all your basket come to?" said I.

"Well, I could tell, if so be as my son, Joe, war here; he makes all the kalkilations, and does up the counts and bills like, he do; but I'll let ee know the next time I comes round, if ee'll be pleased to say what ee'd like to take now."

"But I want to buy the whole basket, so can't you tell me now?" said I.

"Lor! well, I don't know, but aint you afeared, my

dear, as you'll be a making hon yourself hill?" said Mrs. Quince, with distended eyes and compressed lips, evidently even more in the basket than her cakes, and not knowing whether it would be quite prudent to give me credit to such an unheard-of amount.

Perceiving what was passing in her mind, I put my hand into my pocket (for poor Mademoiselle de Guilleragues was vulgar enough always to make us wear pockets in our petticoats) and drew forth a little purse of emerald-green beads and seed pearls, which had been her parting gift, and the slides of which were gold rings, containing little miniatures of Louis XVIII., monstrously like, which were then to be bought at any jeweller's throughout France, for the small sum of six francs. Athwart the meshes of this purse glittered ten golden guineas; their effect was electric, not only upon Mrs. Quince, but upon the whole school, governesses included; however, my business was now with the former, to whom I repeated the question, of how much the whole contents of her basket would amount to?

"Well, my dear young lady, I'll tell ee in a moment, if you'll just be so good as to wait a bit?" said she; instantly, without further delay or demur, commencing the calculation on her fingers, and soon arriving at the "tottle of the hole," without Joe Quince's, or even Joey Hume's assistance. "Well, my lady," for now I was my lady, and all for ten guineas! which was even more dirt cheap than a modern peerage, or

baronetcy; "well, my lady, as near as I can make it in a hurry, just fourteen and twopence."

"Very well," said I, handing her a guinea, "give me seven shillings, and I'll owe you twopence till the next time."

"Lor love your pretty face," said she, placing the guinea between her teeth, while she drew forth a leathern bag of portly dimensions, tied round and round like the neck of a wine skin, with another piece of leather, from which bag she counted out seven shillings, "owe me as much as you like."

"Here, Mirry," cried Grace, giving me a seven-shilling piece, "let me pay half?"

"Not to-day, another time; you know you have generally money when I have none, and then I shall be glad of it."

"Oh, very well, only remember that I owe you seven shillings."

"Now, Mrs. Quince, I'll tell you what you must do for me."

"Lor love ee, what is it? anything short of going a-hossback to the top of St. Paul's Cross."

"I don't want you even to go to Bambury Cross," said I, laughing; "I only want you to leave me your basket till to-morrow morning?"

"Dear heart! to be sure, and welcome; thank ee kindly, my pretty dears, and anything as I can ever do for ye in *my* way, I shall be proud and appy: yer servant, ladies all."

And Mrs. Quince rolled up the gravel-walk, as if she had just dropped from one of the neighbouring trees.

“Now, Grace, help me to carry this great basket; but stop first; Helen, you must lighten it a little: take what you like;” and Helen modestly took a queen-cake and a kiss.

“Nonsense, child! we shall never get on at that rate: hold out your frock;” she did so, and we tossed a shower of cakes and comfits into it. Here Miss Flippens obligingly came forward, and said:

“Allow me, Miss Sedleys, *to help you* carry that basket.”

“Thank you, but we like the fun of carrying it, if you will have the goodness to take what you like out of it.”

“Oh, thank you!” said she, with a sort of half-Italian greyhound, half-governess sort of tremulous incertitude, that strongly reminded us of some of the Squiggins’ *pianissimos* before the Magnates; and Miss Flippens helped herself to a bun of her own breed, that is to say, a plain one.

“Do take some more, pray,” said I, “or we never shall get on, if we don’t find better customers.”

“Oh, I’m sure you are very good;” and with an indescribable sort of little wriggle, or rather *wrigglette*, and her right foot tossed rather jauntily about a quarter of a yard from the ground rearward, she took, what I certainly think she otherwise never

would have got—a kiss; and then, upon second thoughts, for propriety's sake, as witnesses, I suppose, a couple of maids of honour.

We then made a tour of the other teachers, and afterwards the girls. "The double peppermints" being done up in little white cornucopias (of which there were only three), I considerately placed them in Madame Beccaccia's hand, thinking that as she was not Queen Elizabeth, she might not have liked publicly to select and proclaim her favourites. And here again, as with her majesty of hypocritical memory, the maids of honour were very useful in covering the favourite's retreat. Among nearly all the elder girls, our proffered sweets were at first rejected with a—

"No, thank you, I have no money this week."

"Money! you don't suppose we want to sell them?" said I. How I looked as I said this, I'm sure I don't know; but I felt just as a blacksmith's forge looks, when it roars up of a dark winter's night, and the red light glows, and the sparks rush upwards like a prayer of fire, appealing to heaven against the iron blows of man.

"No, thank you, I really have *nothing to give you in return!*" was the second disclaimer; for our national idea, true to our national practice, is "nothing for nothing," and it is for this reason that English people, if you show them the slightest courtesy or attention, and still more, if you volunteer to do them a service, instead of feeling obliged, or even having

the common decency to say, "thank you," always begin wondering what it is you want from them? Or even when they implore you to render them a service, which they do more more servilely than any people under the sun, they think the surest preservative to their pride, which, by-the-bye, is as spurious and abominable a compound as their wines, is never to evince the slightest symptom of recollecting it.

However, as hunger is said to drive the wolf from the wood, so the same tyrant, at length, drove the bear from the Concave House ménagerie; and the young ladies ultimately condescended to devour the cakes. It was a great relief when there was not one more to entail upon me another rebuff, for one gets horribly lacerated in England, in the long run, at being always thrown back upon one's self.

I was sauntering leisurely up to the house with the empty basket, when, in ascending the door-steps, my foot got entangled in the skirt of my frock, and I very nearly fell; but Miss Flippens, who happened to be going in at the same time, caught me, saying, as she seized my arm:

"That's just like I did yesterday."

I confess I was surprised that a person deputed to teach elocution should so express herself, and in my ignorance fancied it arose from a strange non-acquaintance with the English grammar; but after I had been some time longer at Miss James's, and saw poor Priscian's head so much more mutilated, I changed my opinion, and concluded that the copy-book

was right, and that "familiarity" does "breed contempt;" and that consequently it was the great familiarity subsisting between grammars and governesses which made the latter take such terrible liberties with them.

When I had thanked Miss Flippens for her timely intervention, she said to me:

"I suppose, Miss Sedley, as you only came from town to-day, you don't want anything there; but if you do, I am going as far as Temple Bar at five o'clock."

We English are proverbially fond of rarities, so I thanked Miss Flippens cordially for her attention, and said, if she would have the goodness to leave a note for me at No. — Fleet Street, I should be very much obliged to her.

"You are, of course, aware," said she, "that the young ladies never write or receive letters, even to or from their parents, without Miss James's perusing them."

I was not aware of it, and felt extremely indignant at the announcement; making a mental reservation (so much for the efficacy of this disgusting system of *espionage* and restraint) that any letters I really cared about, Miss James should not see; for there is a modesty about all real feeling, which makes it as repugnant to a delicate mind to bare its heart to the profane scrutiny of promiscuous indifference, as it would be to bare the bosom that conceals it. I do not for a moment mean to say, that persons having the charge of

young people of either sex, should not be made scrupulously acquainted with all their pupils' correspondents, even to seeing the writing and signature of every letter they receive, and the commencement and superscription of every letter they write; but the stultifying and uncandid state of mind that this vulgar *surveillance* of reading every letter the pupils write and receive forces upon the latter, is on every account reprehensible. How gratifying it must be to a mother, twice a-year, or even once a quarter, to receive such a document as this from her daughter; and what a delightful idea it must convey to her of the expansion, progress, and affection of her child's heart and mind!

“ Dear Mamma,

“ I hope you are quite well, and also papa. I am very happy here: Miss James is very kind, and many of the young ladies prefer remaining at school for the holidays. I am painting you a pair of screens, which I hope you will like. I also hope to be able to play a duet with Miss Sharpe at this half-year's concert. With love to dear Papa,

“ Believe me, dear Mamma,

“ Your dutiful and affectionate daughter,

“ PRUDENCE FREEZE.

“ April 1st.

“ PS. Pray don't take the trouble of sending the plum-cake, as we have as much as ever we can eat

here; and Miss James thinks sweet things bad for us."

Or such a one as this from a son:

" Mammon House, April 1st.

" My dear Mother,

" Dr. Classicgander desires me to say, that he hopes you and my father, and any friends you would like to bring, will be able to come to our speeches this year; as I am happy to tell you I am well up in my Virgil, and Dr. C. thinks, almost immediately after I go to Harrow, I shall be in the sixth form: this at least is 'my thought by day, and dream by night.' God willing, however, as Petroneus says,

" ' Somnia quæ mentem ludunt volitantibus umbris,
Non delubra Deûm, nec ab æthere numina mitunt,
Sed sibi quisque facit,'

which my father will translate to you.

" With love to him and my sisters, and kindest love to *dear* Aunt Frumpington, whom I hope will come to the speeches,

" Believe me, my dear Mother,

" Your dutiful and affectionate son,

" DIONYSIUS SELF.

" PS. The Dr. having been called away, and having left my letter sealed up upon his desk, I slip in this

piece of paper, to beg you will send me a tip. Try and get me £5 from the Governor, as we have a club in the village, where we have capital feeds, and lots of lush, that the old curmudgeon of a Dr. knows nothing about; but as long as we keep the Greek and Latin going, it's all right—and he never smokes. If the Governor won't shell out, you must make the girls do it between them. Aunt Frumpington gives them lots of cash, and what the deuce do girls want with money?

“ Hoping you will send me the tin immediately,

“ Yours ever, dear Maternal,

“ D. S.

“ PS. Again—*I must* have the blunt by this day week.”

All this passed through my mind, but all I said was:

“ The note is only to an old nurse of ours, who keeps a shop in Fleet Street, and to whom I promised to write as soon as I could, after we came here; and Miss James is very welcome to see it.”

“ Oh! that of course,” rejoined Miss Flippens, as we went up stairs, she going further to prepare for her trip to town, and I turning into the school-room to write my despatch, which for Miss James's special edification I was determined to make as good as Hebrew to her, and accordingly commenced as follows:

“ Ah! thin, Nelly, *allannah*, how are you, woman, and the man that owns you? Sure it's yourself that would say the same to uz, if you were here: so I say purty well, thank you, Mrs. Jiffs, and I hope you're the same, ma'am. Och! Nelly, dear, it's you that would open your two good-looking eyes, if you could see the illigant dinners we have here; it *makes one hungry only to look at them*; and all the young leedies so cute and so sprightly, that you can't look at them, but they begin to laugh, and giggle; but they are mighty discrate for all that, as they never *say* anything; and mighty good-tempered, for they never answer one. In short, Nelly, *agrah!* we'd be as much divarted here, as at the play with Munden, and the other actor wid the fat name. What is it then? oh, Suet! if it was'nt that home *will* stick to one's heart, like a burr to one's clothes and in either case, fretting is the consequence; but plaise the pigs(present company always excepted), it's ourselves that will go and see you, Nelly, *astore!* the first time we can get any one's horses and wheels to take us so far; for your shop is not to be sneezed at, except by *raison* of its being a snuff-shop maybe; and that reminds me of the rest of your stock-in-trade, your own particular pig-tail, Jeffs; we hope he is well, and continues dutiful and obajent, as you larnt him to be from the first; and that unlike Dermot, he's never extramely bould. As Jeffs will tell you, 'wind and tide wait for no man;' and *faix*, Nelly, dear,

tachers do be mighty like wind and tide to their pupils, and as one of ours takes this, no more at present, except Grace's love, and that dearest Nel, of your ever grateful and affectionate child,

“MIRIAM SEDLEY.”

As soon as I had finished this charming epistle, I folded and directed it, and knocking at the side-door, through which I had seen Miss James, and Miss Omeny vanish before dinner, and in which room Helen said they always sat.

“Come in!” said a voice, from under the Scotch terrier wig, which I recognised as Miss Omeny's; so accordingly in I went.

Upon a *chaise longue* near an open window, appropriately shaded with the Passion Flower, sat Miss James, in a half recumbent posture; on a chair beside her, was an animal of the male species, in hay-coloured hair, brushed up into a sort of distaff, which perfectly resembled what his late Majesty Louis Philippe's wig must have been before it came of age; in short, before its light careless hues had been darkened by the shadows of a Crown; but there ended all appearance of regality in the individual in question. His eyes were of the colour, shape, and expression of bottled gooseberries; his nose was short and thick, with spreading nostrils, that gave it exactly the appearance of a *terra cotta* cast of the Ace of Clubs. His upper lip was very short, but not the more beautiful on that account, as it

turned up over, as if running after his nose, which was not however easily overtaken, as it had the start; and also turned up, as if making for his forehead, which was rather low, and rather flat; two thickish wisps of hay formed his eyebrows, while his eyelashes were straight, sturdy, and reddish, like the marine fringe that ornaments a lobster's tail; his mouth was of the credulous order, for it certainly was wide enough to swallow anything; and the under lip exceedingly thick. On his right cheek was a scar, or cicatrice, like that left by a burn, or it might be the evil; and if so, between two evils he had certainly *not* chosen the least, as the scar was a very large one. His teeth were large, and projecting; and his smile the most evaporated-looking thing that can be conceived, rendering his face like a scooped-out pumpkin.

Notwithstanding his *physique*, and his *physic*, however, I afterwards learned that he was *l'enfant gâté* of these ladies, and was a Mr. Perkins, the surgeon and apothecary of the district. The scandalous chronicle asserted that there was in some part of the habitable globe a Mrs. Perkins, who, like the cuckoo, was an oral tradition, but not a visible fact; for no one had ever seen her. The *on dit* was, that her death had been announced as inevitably to take place before the end of the month for the last ten years: and yet that she was such an incorrigible dawdle, that she was not dead yet; another proof of how persons devoting all their time, power, and capacities to the enlarged

circle of the public weal, neglect their own families, and nearer claims; for though numerous were the individuals whom Mr. Perkins *viâ* calomel, laudanum, or phlebotomy, had despatched to the other world, yet his own wife was not a single pill the nearer to it, though the said scandalous chronicle, at the same time, boldly asserted (for the scandalous chronicle, like all others, has two breaths, one hot and the other cold) that Mrs. Perkins *really was* defunct, but that this lenitive electuary of a Macheath was so happy with both Miss James and Miss Omeny, that he did not like to decide upon either; as Miss James's dinners and *petits soupers*, though perhaps not exactly sparkling with the wit of those of the *ancien régime* in France, and Miss Omeny's luncheons, he seemed to think he never could have too much of; whereas, he knew by experience, that a little matrimony goes a great way towards giving one enough of it! and as among the lower and middle orders, the period of courtship is the period of cramming, Mr. Perkins preferred resembling a turkey, to making a goose of himself.

His dress was of course black, with the exception of a cerulean blue watch-ribbon, a present from Miss Omeny; for those were the days of watch-ribbons, and ponderous seals, something like jack or clock-weights. One of three that dangled from Mr. Perkins's fob, had his crest engraved upon it, a vulture with something in its mouth that looked very like a leech; the other contained his initials, "G. R. P.,"

Glauber Rodolphus Perkins, for so he had been christened, after the great German chymist, while the third seal was, (emblem of vestal purity!) a white cornelian, a *souvenir* from Miss James; the device was at once poetical and professional, a pair of scissors opened wide, with the consolatory motto, "We part to meet again."

As I entered the room, Miss Omeny, (whose wig, by the bye, I suppose from emotion, had got a little awry,) was in the act of selecting the finest strawberries from a dish, and transferring them to Mr. Perkins's plate; while Miss James was drinking to him not "only with her eyes," but in a glass of excellent Madeira, which had twice crossed the Line; a present from Miss Sherwood's father. Glauber Rodolphus, not to look too like "Love in Idleness" caught in a thicket of "Venus's Fly-traps," was playfully holding a strawberry-leaf before Miss James's forehead, a sort of acted compliment no doubt, of "how I should like to place an earl's coronet on that brow," or as he himself would have expressed it, "a hurl's," for he either tuned his h's up to concert-pitch in the way of aspiration, or left them totally out of every programme in which they had a legitimate right to appear. I instantly perceived that I had arrived at a very *mal à-propos* moment, for the whole of this pantomime was stopped suddenly short.

"I beg your pardon for disturbing you," said I, walking straight up to Miss James with my letter,

“but Miss Flippens said you wished to see every letter that I wrote, and I have brought you one that I have written to my nurse.”

“Oh!” ejaculated Miss James, instantly consolidating into the perpendicular, “my young ladies are not allowed to write letters whenever they please; there are stated days devoted to *epistolary correspondence*, when the young ladies are permitted, under the superintendence of the teachers, to write home to their own *residences*, or to such friends as may have left town for their country *mansions*; each letter, of course, being finally submitted to me for approval, but as you, Miss Sedley, are only just come, I shall for this once overlook this irregularity, and allow you to send this letter after I have perused its contents.”

Previously, however, to doing so, Miss James thought fit to do me the honour of presenting me to Glauber Rodolphus, but with that ineffable vulgarity of mind peculiar to English people, who never value you for what you are, but always for what you have, or for your connexions; instead of simply naming me as one of her new pupils, and his future patients, (for it was the rule of the school, that all the girls were to be dosed twice a week, whether they wanted it or not, an admirable expedient for increasing Glauber Rodolphus’s bills, and diminishing the small *quantum* of flesh that spare diet left upon their bones,) she said:

“Miss Miriam Sedley, Mr. Perkins; a niece of Lord Lutron’s and Sir George Paulett’s, one of my new pupils.”

"Most proud and appy, Miss, to be so *circumstanced* in Miss James's 'Establishment,' as to ave the hoppertoonty of making your acquaintance, for I once ad the *honer* of attendin your *huncle*, Sir George, *professionally*; it was before you was born I should say, now a'most seventeen years ago, indeed I was quite a youngster myself then."

"Ah! you must indeed have been young then," asided Miss James, with a sigh, as if she feared he was now old enough to know better.

"And it so appened," continued Mr. Perkins, "that while walking the hospitals, what with too much stooody, and one think or another, I ad injured my ealth," (*recitative* sighs from Miss James and Miss Omeny,) "and so ran down to the Isle of Wight for change of hair!" (that I was by no means surprised at,) "your huncle, Sir George, was then canvassing Newport, for which place he was hultimately returned. Never eared a better speaker in my life, and it so appened, that one morning, having received a message from his committee, and thereupon dressing in a great urry to go down to the ustings, his valley in shaving him cut him; I was at breakfast in the coffee-room of the hotel, when one of the waiters came running in looking for some cobweb to staunch the blood; I instantly went up stairs, and hofferred my services to dress the wound, the job was so slight that I refused to take a fee, and so, Sir George, who, as I suppose, I need not tell you, Miss, always does heverythink

in the andsomet way possible, presented me with his own gold snuff-box, which I always carry about me, you may see, Miss," concluded he, producing it and opening the lid, "his harms are hinside."

I seized the box, and kissed it as rapturously as Miss James could have done herself, but not because it belonged to Mr. Perkins, but because it had belonged to my dear good uncle, whom I again found sparkling like a gem even among all this rubbish; and, despite every effort to suppress them, I burst into tears, which of course procured me a lecture from Miss James, who said "that young ladies should never give way to their feelings: it was vulgar, to say the least of it."

Here Mr. Perkins scientifically suggested that the snuff might be in fault, and thankful for this diversion in my favour, I indignantly dried my eyes, and meanly let the tobacco bear the blame; after which Miss James began reading my letter to Nelly; a great elevation of the eyebrows was the first symptom she evinced.

"Pray, Miss Miriam," said she, at the third line, "may I ask what language this is?"

"The most classical Clanfuddle, Ma'am."

"The most classical *what*!"

"Irish, Ma'am."

"Dear me," said Miss James, while Miss Omeny gave a sympathetic shrug, "how your education must have been neglected!"

“Terribly, Ma’am; for I have learned a great many languages, beside beginning with English.”

Miss James took no notice of the pertness of this reply; and the satire of it, of course, she did not understand.

“Do you, who know everything, understand Irish, Mr. Perkins?” said she, placing my elegant epistle in his hand.

“Well,” replied Glauber Rodolphus, taking his chin between the finger and thumb of his right hand, and glancing diagonally to and fro across the paper, as if he were trying medically to recollect whether Irish was infectious, contagious, or cutaneous; “well, I never tried, but I dare say I do; for I have attended a many of the lower horders of Hirish, professionally, (gratis, of course). Em!—em!—em! ‘Ah!’ that means ‘Ha!’ the same has hin Henglish; ‘then,’ I presume, his meant for a Henglish word, but there his a slight orthographical horror hin it, for it should be spelt ‘then,’ and not ‘thin.’ Em! em! em! ‘Al—hal, Al Hannah.’ I have heered of hall Betty Martin,” observed Mr. Perkins, facetiously, when he came to the word “Alannah;” “but I never heered of all Hannah before. Em! em! em!” continued he, deciphering the rest of the hieroglyphics to himself; “hum! I should decidedly give it as my opinion, Miss James, after hexamining this ere tongue—ha! ha! ha!” loudly laughed Mr. Perkins at his own wit—“that this letter is not genuine Hirish, but merely

a make-game sort of letter—a joke, like—on the part of Miss Miriam, to one of the lower horders of Hirish.”

Miss James, glancing from Mr. Perkins to the strawberries, thought they had waited too long; and evidently thinking I had done the same, gave me back my letter, saying:

“Well, Miss Miriam Sedley, as you say this Nelly is your nurse, you may send this letter this once; but in future you must not make any jokes, or have any jests, that I or Miss Omeny cannot understand.”

Thought I, as I curtseyed, and left the room, glad to have got off so well, “It would be very hard to make a jest that you *did* understand.”

In the school-room I found Miss Flippens, ready-scarfed, straw-bonnetted, and green-veiled, to start for town. I hastily sealed my letter, and gave it to her, remarking that I feared she would find it very hot.

“Oh, I don’t walk—I *shall ride*,” said she.

“But how can you ride, without a habit?” replied I, in my then ignorance of this crowning English vulgarity, which always substitutes ride for drive.

“I don’t mean to ride on horseback.”

“Well, but even on a donkey?” interrupted I.

“Lor! I never do that,” laughed Miss Flippens, “except at Ramsgate, where Miss James sometimes takes us in the holidays, when *I help drive* the donkeys for the young ladies, and occasionally get on one

myself; but I always ride in the Kensington coach as far as the Bank."

I stared; but as, like Sterne, I interfere with no man's hobby, or woman's either, as long as it don't splash me—which the imaginary steed upon which I had mounted poor Miss Flippens certainly could not do, though albeit the four wheels of the Kensington coach, converted into a ride, did very rudely bespatter my point device ideas of the English language; and to this day I have a silly trick of positively writhing under the sufferings of that noble language, mutilated as it is by the scavenger's daughter of bad grammar, and broken on the wheel of mispronunciation; for I totally differ from Shakspeare, and quite agree with Mr. Shandy, that there is everything in a name; otherwise such graces of language and style as the following could not pass unlashd, even in the milk-and-water pages of "a British Female," if the authoress had not made a name.

An English Peeress (not in jest, mind, but in solemn seriousness) is described in a recent "popular novel," as writing to a young lady whom she wishes her son to marry (an heiress of course), and speaking of this son, whom she wishes to pourtray as a desponding lover, she says: "*I can assure you, my dear, he is become dreadful bad since you have been gone;*" while "*I'll do it in a jiffy,*" is the favourite expression that the authoress puts into the mouth of the heroine whom she denominates "a young lady of

fashion," upon the charitable principle, I suppose, of the Dutch painter, who used to write under his productions, "This is a tree," "This is a cow," &c., &c., fearing that without such announcements, the identity of the objects never could be guessed at. Again, as a proof of the omnipotence of a name, the whole world have heard of John Hampden; and how many of the world I should like to know have heard of Sir Dudley Digges, equally a patriot, flourishing at the same time, nobly fighting with immense contemporary renown in the same cause, and moreover a distinguished scholar and author, but such a name naturally digs his grave with posterity; a great name has fame for its shadow, which, like every other shadow increases as time advances by ever going forward, for *vestigia nulla retrorsum*.

But Miss Flippens who had not a great name, and consequently no shadow to signify—with substance in proportion, five minutes after I had given her my letter to Nelly, contrived with the temper and keenness of a razor, to wedge herself as sixth into the Kensington coach, called the "Despatch" (I suppose from its being four hours in getting to the Bank) between another much blunter blade, in a brown coat and dark-coloured shorts, and gaiters, who never made the least way for her, and a fat woman in a crimson stuff-gown and a blue satin bonnet, with a black feather in it. I had followed her to the gate as the coach drew up, and perceived some of the young

gentlemen peeping over the wall at "Mammon House" opposite, who appeared most classically shocked at this false quantity; and, while they were still laughing at poor Miss Flippens's *charade en action* of *multum in parvo*, I retraced my steps to the garden, and rejoined Grace and Helen Penrose.

At eight o'clock, we "sky-blued and dry-breaded it," as the girls more graphically than elegantly called—what the teachers denominated "supper!" and indeed that most social word was much abused in being so used; for this repast consisted of three square pieces of bread, almost an inch thick, which seemed to have been left next a piece of butter in the larder, and had reflected its shadow; these three squares (not solid ones most assuredly) were placed before each girl, with the same blue mugs that graced the dinner-table, half filled with very feeble milk and water; for the milk morning and evening at "Concave House," like Cowper's rose, always had been washed—just washed with a shower which Jemima to the schoolroom conveyed.

At half-past eight prayers were gabbled, for I cannot call them read, or said; at nine, we went to bed, and I was surprised that previously to so doing, the soap and water were left quite unmolested; but on the other hand, there was a great ceremony of curling hair—the young ladies having their combs, brushes, and paper in linen bags for that purpose, and some of the said combs and brushes looked as if they would

be all the better for a little of that soap and water which their owners so heroically denied themselves. The governesses did not come to bed till eleven—one sleeping in each of the rooms, and ours had the lion's share, in Madame Beccaccia; she and her bed being a very ill-assorted pair, the former being so large, and the latter so small; consequently the groans and struggles of both, during the night, were dreadful, the sacking and wood-work of the one resenting, with a vehement creaking and squeaking, the incessant twistings and turnings of the other; and so, with a fervent prayer, and another flood of tears, when the lights were taken away, and no one was there to scold me for being so vulgarly demonstrative as to show any feeling, even if I was unlady-like enough to possess it, ended the first day we passed at Miss James's establishment, which may be taken as a type of all the rest.

The next morning Morden, however, brought us word that my Aunt Bell had been found (intact) at an hotel in St. James's Street, for she had flown into a violent passion with him for having discovered her retreat, which he had done quite accidentally, by seeing her at a window, as he happened to look up to see whether it rained, as he was going with the dogs for their morning walk into St. James's Park. She was, moreover, he said, as furious with Grace and me, as if the going to school had been all our doing, instead of our detestation. However, in this

my Aunt Bell, worthy soul, was only like the world; which, instead of pitying us for our misfortunes, generally further maltreats us on account of them, and revenges them on us. And yet this is called an enlightened age! if so:

“ Si ergo lumen tenebræ sunt, ipsæ tenebræ quantæ erunt? ”

CHAPTER X.

THE disagreeables of most positions seem to lessen under a more intimate acquaintance with them ; for “ the great first cause—least understood,” has kneaded the stern necessity of his decrees with the lightening leaven of compensation, and the same familiarity that takes the gloss and the edge from pleasure, generally blunts the sting of sorrow, discomfort, and disappointment. But I cannot say that the leaven rose well at Concave House : on the contrary, as week followed week, and month month, our individual daily bread grew heavier and heavier ; to have one’s physical hunger deluded with garbage, when one has been used to Cates, is bad enough ; but to have the mind’s cravings goaded by inanity is ten times worse, and however small the spark of sacred fire within us may be, yet if it has been kindled at the great altar of high

intelligence, it has a hard struggle to keep its flame steady through the dense miasmas of an atmosphere of ignorance and neglect. "The progress of learning" at Miss James's was about as interesting and instructive to us as the being condemned to three or four hours of ragged school A, B, C work would have been to Locke, or to Sir Isaac Newton,—in all humility I speak it, though great the comparison be, and the little that was taught was all wrong; but such is the system of English education, which consists of a tariff of suppressed facts, or facts distorted or falsified to suit what is considered the orthodox moral standard.

Hence, beyond these little stultified, decorated, and made up abridgments of history, literature, and biography, the male and female youth so educated seldom know, or care to know, a single fact. Men, indeed, may, if they please, both with profit and repute, soar into the higher and wider regions of knowledge; but woe to the woman who dares to unfold her intellectual wings for the same journey, for she is looked upon as a sort of human bat, not tolerated by the hawks of men, and pulled to pieces by the cats of women. She may console herself with her own thoughts, and, like a bee, revel in the hive she has stored; true, and this would be all very well, if to borrow a truth from the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, the end of a human being were thought, and not action; but as that end happens to be the latter, our thoughts will always influence our actions: and it is

precisely because there is so little right and well directed thought, especially among women, that there are so few good and praiseworthy actions.

Even in more modern times, namely, the present, which have left the war and its monstrosities seven and twenty years behind, and when the rising generation have the inestimable benefit and blessing of that deputy special Providence for children, "Peter Parley," to whom, as testimonials are the fashion, every child ought to contribute, at least, a month's toys, and their mothers a quarter's pin-money to raise one, yet still the young are not quite fairly dealt with, even by "Peter Parley," that real Peter the Great, for in his biographies he also uses the scissors and the varnish-brush a little too much—as in his "Life of Nelson," for instance. The impression conveyed by that memoir is that, among his other numerous virtues, he was also a paragon of a husband. Now, I do not for a moment mean to say that young minds should be vitiated by details of his *liaison* with Lady Hamilton, any more than they should with a history of the intrigues and immoralities of Queen Elizabeth, but I do say that, in both instances, the facts should be stated, and not those eternal false impressions, with their ultimate poison conveyed, for it is in vain we learn, in after-years, the degrading or indefensible vices of persons who have been held up to us as models and candidates for our admiration in youth, the inevitable consequence of all such false standards of

greatness is the conclusion that a little worldly glory does, and ought to gild, what in ordinary mortals, without either name or fame, would be considered unpardonable and inexcusable vices and crimes.

Few suns had more brightness to redeem their spots than Nelson's; he was, indeed, a real hero; not from his martial skill in organizing and triumphantly achieving those wholesale butcheries which men call glory, but from his noble, generous, straight-forward, honest heart, his high and single mind, where simplicity sat enthroned—as it does in all *really* great minds—like a star within its own pure orbit; his tender humanity to his men—more like that of a mother than a commander—his chivalric honour, which really raised the mere plebeian thew of animal courage into an almost sublime attribute, and his total absence of all petty jealousies, in *la lutte du métier*. His manner of presenting Captain Berry to George the Third, at the first levee he went to after losing his own arm, would alone, without one of his victories, have made him a hero—in my estimation.

“ You have lost your right arm !” said the King.

“ But not my right hand,” replied Nelson; “ as I have the honour of presenting Captain Berry to your Majesty; and I can never think that a loss which the performance of my duty has occasioned.”

As far as this generous, warm-hearted compliment to Captain Berry goes—worth a thousand baronies or ribbons of the Bath—we may turn in vain to the

encyclopædiæ of history—article Wellington, in the hope of finding a similar trait; but then, to be sure, Nelson was a sort of golden-age hero, and the Iron Duke is an iron-age one: and even that has passed away, and given place to an age of tin—which is the Sheffield version of the golden calf that all England now bow down to and worship—their *Hudson*-worship outdoing, in unspiritual idolatry, the Ganges worship of the Hindoos.

For some time after our incarceration at Miss James's, Morden continued to bring us either a letter, or news of my uncle and the dogs every morning—for he had soon left off bringing the poor darlings themselves, as these daily renewed partings were too painful on both sides—for there is nothing more harrowing than the “inarticulate cries and sobbings of a dumb creature,” which, as Carlyle says, “in the ear of heaven are prayers.”

We also received, by the same channel, constant letters from Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, and Bloom Belzoni, which letters, and our answers to them, we did not give Miss James the trouble of reading, for the former contained details of private and personal affairs, which, not being our own, we had no right to divulge, and the latter were an analysis of feelings, which Miss James could not comprehend, and, consequently, would have deemed highly reprehensible. I am sorry that we were driven into this concealment, for concealments are always objectionable, if not always criminal:

but what could we do? We were much too old to succumb to the scholastic epistolary formula of "My dear Mrs. This, or Miss That, we are quite well, and hope you are the same." The very desultory and unaccredited nature of our education, without either father or mother (which is always a lamentable, and, when not caused by death, an unnatural position), had given us, perhaps, too great an independence of character to moral rectitude, both my uncle and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had taught us to cling, as to a grappling-iron, and never to slacken our hold let what temptations or persecutions might ensue, but always to make the lesser duty yield to the greater, or pleasure, profit, or convenience give way to either.

Now feeling that there was no positive wrong in not showing Miss James our letters, beyond the non-conformance with a very equivocal rule, and that it would have been actually dishonourable to betray the confidence intrusted to us by others, we continued to receive our letters through Morden, without Miss James's intervention. At least those that came from France; for my uncle, after he left town, always directed his letters to us openly and honestly, as he did everything, and completely won, or rather would have won, Miss James's and Miss Omeny's susceptible hearts (if Glauber Rodolphus had not been beforehand with him) by the honourable mention he always made of their names, especially, as I, having reminded him of Mr. Perkins' "*professional attendance*" to

administer a piece of court-plaister to his chin when he was canvassing Newport; he on one occasion strung the three names of James, Omeny, and Perkins together

“In linked sweetness long drawn out,”

which had such a sort of bridal foreshadowing in it; such a mystic echoing of the future chime of marriage-bells in the very vowels and consonants that composed this triumvirate, that Miss James went off into impromptu hysterics; and the gardener had to be despatched to Seidlitz Lodge, Turnham Green, for Glauber Rodolphus, two hours sooner than the usual time of his diurnal visit to Concave House.

For about six months Bloom wrote to us punctually every fortnight, after which her letters became less frequent, and were evidently written in bad spirits, though she mentioned having been on a visit to a Madame de St. Florentin, who had hired for the summer the beautiful old *campagne* of *Château de Fontaine Le Henri*, near Caën, in Normandy, of whose *bosquets*, *pleasaunces*, *charmilles*, and tapestried rooms, she spoke in raptures. After she returned to Paris, I only heard from her twice; and the last letter, though as affectionate as ever, was very short, and ended abruptly by saying:

“God bless you, dearest Grace and Mirry, and keep you from ever ———.” But what it was we

were to be kept from, I know not, as the lines were blotted out, and nothing legible, but

“Your ever grateful and affectionate

“BLOOM BELZONI.”

At the end of three months, hearing nothing more, I wrote to her father, entreating him to let us know how he and Bloom were. His answer was speedy, but anything but satisfactory; for, touching his daughter, he wrote as follows:

“With regard to Bloom (what a mockery that name is, and always has been, ever since the poor child was left to wither!) I scarcely know how to answer you. It is true I see a silent shadow beside my own, moving about me; nay, more, it comes when I call, and does my bidding; and that as gently as if it were a spirit, which I think it soon will be, when I say ‘Bloom,’ it answers (always gently), ‘Well, father,’ and then I look up, and see the transparency of a fair face; but in vain I look for my child behind it. For three months that she was away, I felt as if either she or I were dead. She is now corporeally restored to me, but I am but half a Jairus, or it is but half a miracle, for her soul seems left behind. And when I ask her what is the matter, she says, ‘Nothing, dear father.’ Nothing! nothing! nothing! always nothing! Ay, that *is* the echo of everything in this world!”

It seemed that all my sorrows were to come to-

gether—oh! not all—for the Grand Inquisitor, Fate, knows better the science of torture than to despatch us at one blow; no, no, he deals them in succession, and punishes every complaint against his cruelty with a fresh agony. While we were still wondering and fearing all sorts of things from the silence of Bloom, my uncle's letters also grew shorter and less frequent, though never less affectionate or agreeable, and at length came a dictated letter in a strange hand, saying his sight had become so bad, that he was threatened with total blindness, and that he had been ordered to the Mont d'Or, in the Pyrenees, where a certain great oculist of the name of Montholieu, was at that time (with the waters) effecting wonderful cures. The letter went on to say that he, (my uncle,) should have liked to have taken at least one of us with him, but that my Aunt Marley was opposed to this, and so as usual he had yielded; it is true, both my aunts had not only volunteered, but strongly insisted upon accompanying him, but as perfect quiet and peace of mind had been enjoined him, as an essential part of the *régime* he was to be under, this proposition was peremptorily negatived by his medical attendants; so he was compelled to set out on his journey only accompanied by a travelling physician, and Clarence Paulett, (Sir Joseph's youngest son), a fine rattling boy of eighteen, who had been pronounced a dunce at every school he had been at, and afterwards at Cambridge, and consequently had turned out rather above par. Morden

was also to join him, so that it now seemed as if really an hourly growing brazen wall was being erected between us, and home—*home!* I had still to learn that I was of those whom nature disinherits, and that I had no home! It is the peculiarity of youth to either underrate or overrate every misfortune; a precipice yawns before it, and provided there are a few flowers on the margin, it smiles, a passing cloud veils its sunshine for a moment, and it weeps as if the sun itself had expired, and all creation had become an orphan. To hear that my uncle was likely to become blind, was indeed, and would have been at any time, a positive and heavy misfortune; still exaggeration is the tribute that affection demands from grief; and had my uncle's death been announced to take place on a certain day, I could scarcely have felt a greater weight of agony and despair, for like a sponge, the heart can but be full, even if what it imbibes into its every pore, turns out, upon analyzation, to be mere water instead of deadly poison. Grace, who was quite as much afflicted as I was at this terrible news, only more rationally and submissively so, in vain urged upon me all the chances of recovery there were, and that even if our worst fears were fulfilled, it did not follow that it would be perpetual blindness.

“But they are such kind eyes, such beautiful eyes,” sobbed I, as my own, which “would not be comforted,” still rained torrents.

"They will still be as kind and as beautiful," said Grace, as she dried her own quiet tears, "for the heart that makes them so, can never be either blind or deaf."

"Oh! but he won't be able any longer to see in our eyes how we love him."

"And don't you think we can make him feel it, even if he don't see it, Mirry?"

"I don't know, I only know it is barbarous, and abominable, and wicked of my Aunt Marley to prevent our going with him. I wish she would kill me at once, and not torture me in every way as she does; I have nothing—nothing to love me now, not even my poor dog."

"I may be nothing, but you know I love you, Miriam," said poor Grace, taking my head between both her hands and kissing my forehead as she added, "besides, distance, you foolish child, does not prevent affection: on the contrary, I am sure it increases it; for how much more (if possible) we have loved dear, kind, generous Uncle Paulett, since we have been in this place, where every one is such a contrast to him, in manner and nature; and depend upon it, he loves and misses us equally; for, as you know, Mirry, how one misses even a poor dog that one loves."

"Ah!" said I, still ingeniously setting aside everything in the shape of consolation, which that great bigot, grief, always looks upon as heresy, "that is,

because we always miss what we love more than we miss what loves us."

"Begging your pardon, Mirry, that is what poor dear Mademoiselle de Guilleragues always accused you of doing, namely, going *au-devant du malheur*; for don't you suppose that Uncle Paulett loves us quite as much as we love him?"

"Certainly not," rejoined I, "for he has not the same reason to do so."

"That is no reason," said Grace, whose good heart was early wise with the great wisdom of Gospel-truth, "for does not the Bible say, 'it is more blest to give, than to receive;' therefore, is uncle Paulett more blest than we are; and as there is no blessing without love, depend upon it he loves us, Mirry, for do we not always love the plant we water, and the animal we feed, still more the human being we save?"

I threw my arms round Grace's neck, and promised that as long as I had her I would not be so ungrateful as to be utterly miserable, or to say that I had nothing to love me. But verily, it does not do to bargain with Heaven, or dictate terms to Omnipotence, which soon convinces us that our will is *nul* in its fiats; for, as Mademoiselle de Guilleragues truly used to say, Fate is our lord and master, and like most others, seldom atones for one blow, but by another; and the very next morning, Miss James received an official letter from my Aunt Marley, stating, that I

was to remain another year in her edifying "Establishment," but that as she had already spent a whole year in, in vain trying to make my father hear reason, as she expressed it, she could not bear being separated from Grace any longer, and therefore sent over her maid, who, with Morden, would accompany her as far as Kingstown, where she (my Aunt Marley) would meet her.

This really was too much; I felt the bitter injustice of all these needless separations, it was breaking one's heart into such very small fragments, and piecemeal too: why not dash it down, and by shivering it at one blow, put one out of one's misery! I recalled, or rather drew into one dark focus, all the events of my short life; and for the first time, with that superstition which affliction never fails to instil, I construed the manner of our being taken from our father's house during the darkness of the night, and literally launched upon a stormy sea, wherein we had nearly perished, as a type of our whole future fate. However, I was spared that too cruel parting with Grace, for I was that night seized with a brain fever. Miss James, in this instance, sensibly enough concealed the fact from Grace, knowing she would not go and leave me if she was aware how seriously ill I was. She was therefore only told that I had had a very bad night, and was then asleep, and it would be a pity to run the risk of waking me; and with this, as she afterwards told me, she was deluded into the

yellow post chaise, with Martin inside, and Morden out, that was to convey her to Holyhead. At the end of three weeks, I began to recover; the first object that met my view was Mr. Perkins, he was feeling my pulse with one hand, while he held in the other a large silver turnip of a watch, whose pale face and mine he was alternately consulting.

"Mr. Perkins," said I, looking at him, and then round the room, with that sort of sensible vacuity with which one half recognises objects through the medium of reality, out of delirium.

"Ha, my dear Miss Miriam, like Kean in Richard III., which I went to see last night, I find you are 'yourself again.' I shall be indeed proud and appy to be able to send so favourable a bulletin (or as Mr. Perkins pronounced it, bullatang), to Sir George, though not to alarm him, or lead him to happreend anythink serious. I never said that you ad ad a brain-fever, but merely that you was not quite the thing, but that I soon oped to set you hup."

"Have I had a brain-fever?"

"Why, yes; I'am sorry to say as you ave."

"And where is Grace? I want to see my sister."

"Ha," said Mr. Perkins, with a charitable falsehood, rubbing the closed fist of his right hand round the palm of his left the while, as if he had been blending the lie with a few grains of probability, and a few scruples of conscience, in a mortar: "ha! we

were afeared, my dear Miss Miriam, that your sister might take the fever, and so Miss James thought it better to send her away dooring your hillness, my dear, that's hall."

"Oh, that was right," said I; "but of course she has written to me very often."

"Oh, dear yes," said Miss Flippens, whose thin, long, bleak north-wind looking nose, I now for the first time perceived rounding the point of the curtain of the bed; "Miss James *has a deal* of letters and parcels for you; and there have been *such a many* carriages, some coroneted ones too, to inquire after you, and an odd sort of Irish woman, whom we could hardly prevent from forcing her way up."

"Poor Nelly! and did none of the people in the carriages ask for me?" said I with a smile, little grateful for the miraculous inquiries of the carriages themselves.

"Oh! of course; it was the *company in* them that did inquire for you," matter-of-facted Miss Flippens, who then added, with a ramrod curtsey, and a charming placidity of voice: "but I trust you feel much better, Miss Miriam?"

If one could always be in a fever, or even contrive a sort of portable burn or scald, that one could, however, discard at will, I don't know anything that would be so agreeable as English manners, as there is no cold that penetrates to one's very marrow like them; ice and snow are fools to them, for there is a

glowing reaction in the latter, which you never need apprehend from the former.

"I very much regret to say, Miss Sedley," resumed Miss Flippens, "that all your beautiful hair has been cut off."

"Yes," chimed in Mr. Perkins, rising from his chair, and into Pope:

"Clipped from the lovely *ead* where once it grew!"

"Perchance it now, may make a wig,—or two?" said I, wanting an excuse to laugh, as Glauber Rodolphus in the heroics, was more than my risible muscles, enfeebled as they were, could stand.

"Ha! ha! ha! very good, I howe you one."

"Then if you do," rejoined I, "pray pay me in money, and not by a draft (draught)."

With another ha! ha! ha! Mr. Perkins said he should certainly "tell that to my huncle; and now, my dear young lady," added he, "you must keep quite quiet, for hunfortunately you hare of a very hexcitable *temperatoore*;" for such was the word Mr. Perkins always preferred substituting for temperament.

"But may I not see Helen Penrose? I should like to see her."

"Miss Penrose is gone home for the holidays," said Miss Flippens, in her nice, cool, milk-and-water voice.

I sighed as I asked myself, when would my holidays come? Should I ever go home? What, and

where was my home? Going to my Aunt Marley—*that was not home*; oh, no! even staying at school was better than that. The Pyrences, the Mont d'Or: my uncle was there: *that* must be my home, though I had never seen it; and upon this I fell into a troubled sleep, and dreamt I was clambering up high mountains, and as soon as I got to the top, slipping down again.

My recovery was a slow and tedious proceses; for neither Mr. Perkins nor Miss James knew exactly how to “minister to a mind diseased.” Senna! was their only panacea for sorrow. Reader, as a friend, and from bitter experience of its inefficacy, in cases of mental affliction, I advise you never to resort to it.

CHAPTER XI.

LOBSTERS, naturalists tell us (and, indeed, if they did not, we might imagine the fact) feel very miserable when they have cast their shells; therefore any lobster reading this work—and why not?—for even if Mr. Cobden were to stew down the army into a *consommé pacifique* to-morrow, still, between the submarine telegraphs, the electro-telegraphic snails, and education from the million, surely, without presumption, one may expect to have at least one lobster for a reader, as well as a whole shoal of crabs for reviewers. Any lobster therefore, I repeat, reading this work, may easily imagine how miserable I felt, left alone without my shell, as it were, at Concave House; but still whatever sympathy he, she, or it may feel for me, I beg them to believe that I had infinitely the worst of it; for *they* not only get a new shell in time, but also get under the rocks in the meanwhile. Now it is true, that I was equally sur-

rounded by *rocks* ! but I should not like to have got under them, and it was quite impossible *to get over them*, by any means that generally win ordinary mortals.

I had serious thoughts at one time of Hannibalizing them with vinegar ; but there was only one cruet allowed for the whole school, and “ what was one among so many ? ” Till the return of the girls after the vacation, I was naturally thrown into more intimate communication with the four teachers, and like Zobeide, with the calenders, in the Arabian Nights, I was struck with amazement at the similarity of their misfortunes ; not, indeed, that they had all lost an eye, or that even one of them had incurred such a disaster ; but from what I could glean from their conversation, it appeared that they were all lost Pleiads, never intended to be governesses, and this, perhaps, sufficiently accounts for their certainly not not having been fit to be such. Madame Beccaccia, it seems, was the daughter of a gentleman who had gone great lengths in attempting to discover the longitude, in which, however, he had not been so successful as his daughter had in her discovery of the latitude. But had he succeeded, there was no doubt he would have been one of the first men in England, and then she would never have married Beccaccia, the fencing master, and never have been a teacher in a school : “ Certainly not ! ”

In Mademoiselle de Montmorency’s genealogical

trec, the ought-to-have-been preventative to *her* being a governess was an incipient alderman—a sort of mistletoe, I suppose, grafted on this famous tree—who *was to have been* lord mayor, but who, unfortunately, died of a surfeit, accumulated at a civic feast, the very year preceding his own mayoralty; in short, thought I, to quote from one of those delicious burlesques of English history, which the French call *dramas historiques*, that are perpetrated at the minor theatres in Paris :

“ Il coule dans ses veines le plus noble sang d’Angleterre,
Son bisaïeul a été même *deux fois Lord Mayor* ! ”

“ So that I ought,” invariably concluded Mademoiselle de Montmorency, *alias* Miss Sally Humphries, as she related the touching little incident of the demise of her paternal uncle, the alderman, “ I ought, if right was right, instead of being governess in a school, to be *riding in my carriage*; and not compelled to take a foreign name, to spare the feelings of my family.”

“ Still,” said I, “ the Montmorencys are worse off, for *they are driven* ! ”

I also thought that had the alderman dined with his namesake, the Duke, this would not have happened.

The gentle Flippens, then shooting off with the other lost stars, would announce with a sigh, that she ought at that present time to have been the daughter of a general officer, as her mother had married an ensign in a marching regiment, who had actually

fought and flourished into a company; had lost his pocket-handkerchief and his left ear at the storming of Seringapatam; survived the fever at Walcheren, but had ultimately died of being a Major! on his return home. Poor gentleman! how strong his sense of the ridiculous must have been, to have taken the thing so terribly to heart, instead of living to get over it; but so it was.

Miss Sharpe's greatness was to have descended—or ascended, in the collateral line; passing over her individual head, and settling upon that of her sister, whom it seems had, once at Bagnigge Wells, danced two reels and four successive country dances (to say nothing of Sir Roger de Coverley), with a young gentleman whom she had supposed to be merely an individual in private life—that is, a solicitor's clerk *or such like!* but who turned out to be a real live Lord!—an Irish Peer, in short. As Miss Sharpe was wont to add, modestly casting down her eyes, as if it had been herself, and not her sister, who “had owned the soft impeachment,” why should I conceal the base, perfidious man's name, *though he is a nobleman?*—It was Lord Mountflummery.

He proposed, and was accepted the same evening; and so eager did he seem for the marriage, that he insisted upon its taking place that day-week at the Temple Church; and, as you may suppose, we had enough to do *to help get* ready Sarah Jane's wedding things—and a deal of expense it put my father and

mother to. Well, would you believe it? After keeping us a whole hour waiting at the church, this base deceiver sent a letter to say his mother had discovered everything, and had sent him out of the country; and that, before Sarah Jane could receive that letter, he should be half seas over to Madeira, but that he never should forget her, or Bagnigge Wells; and that all his life "sharp" would be the word with him.

"Eh! villain!" groaned Miss Sharpe, in conclusion.

"Why, yes," said I, one day, at the termination of this tale of lovely woman's stooping to folly, and finding too late that men betray, "it was too hard of him to give your sister a week's preparation, without a companion to the altar:" still, for the life of me, I could not make out why English people of the middle class should always be ashamed of that state of life into which it has pleased God to call them, by trying in words to make it appear that their original destination was something so very superior to their positive position; while not one of them seemed the least abashed at being so totally incapable of fulfilling the duties of the situation they had undertaken. Indeed, I once had a long, but ineffectual argument with them, to try and convince them, that if one was born a princess, and was reduced to being a housemaid, the latter circumstance could not alter one's birth; and the only thing really contemptible or ridiculous in

one's fallen fortunes would be, the giving one's self the airs of a princess, and neglecting one's work as a housemaid; in short, that the filling badly the post assigned us by destiny was the only real disgrace; and that, were the case *vice versâ*, a housemaid would not be a bit the nearer to being a lady, because she had married a prince, and was called a princess, as long as her habits, manners, and conversation, continued to be those of a housemaid.

But I might have spared my breath; the burden of their song was, "Ah, Miss Sedley, it is a terrible thing to be a teacher in a school, when one ought to be *riding in one's carriage!*" These women were surely a striking and practical refutation of Göthe's assertion (at least I think it is Göthe's), "that our desires are the presentiments of the faculties that are in us, the precursors of the things we are capable of executing;" for most decidedly, not one of these four could by any alchemy have been transmuted into "a lady," though such was their "vaulting ambition." Still, perhaps, the error arose from a misapplication of terms; their ideas of being a lady consisted in what they denominated *riding in a carriage!* and mine, in persons having the feelings and carriage of a gentlewoman.

Nothing could be more wretched than the next six months of my life at Miss James's. I did not, like Cæsar, fret because I was bald, or even like him seek to cover the defect by a diadem of such stunted laurels,

as Concave House afforded, nor was there any necessity that I should do so; for Nature, the only mother I ever knew, was fast restoring my tresses, and making them more luxuriant than those I had lost; but the fact is, I was becoming as cruel as Charles the Ninth; and so impatient of my position, that, like him, I used to long to demolish at a blow the head of every ass and bore* that came in my way: a sanguinary propensity, which, I am sorry to say, has rather increased with me than diminished upon a more extensive acquaintance with society. Grace and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues were my only correspondents, for, from the Belzonis, father and daughter, I heard nothing, which made me very uneasy; besides, my serious unhappiness about my dear uncle's eyes, which still prevented his writing to me, and Clarence Paulett's short, scrambling, unsatisfactory letters, were but a poor substitute for those "home newspapers," as Hannah More aptly calls them, that I used to get from my uncle, glowing with that all-pervading affection, which leaves no feeling unsteeped in, or unregenerated by its sanctifying influence, and creaming with that sparkling wit, which, like electric fluid, still illumines the highest, while it penetrates the densest matter. Alas! I had yet to learn that his was a model heart, of which

* One of Charles IX.'s favourite pastimes was carrying a large sword, and decapitating, at one blow, the head of every unfortunate donkey and pig that came in his way—a species of "select" practical improvement upon Caligula's theory.

nature had broken the mould; it was the firm rock-crystal heart of a great man, lined with the fine texture and downy softness of a good woman's. Clarence said in his last letter :

"My uncle's general health and spirits are decidedly better; but Dr. Montholieu strictly interdicts his using his eyes, either in reading or in writing; but he desires me to tell you, Mirry, that the eyes of the heart never grow dim, and he is glad to see with them, that you bear your fate at Miss James's so heroically."

Though I knew this was not meant for "satire in disguise," yet decidedly never was praise more undeserved; for I fear Mr. Perkins was right, and that I *had* a very excitable "*tempratoore*," or perhaps it was, to quote from a still greater man (at least in other people's estimation), that unawares I was continually asking myself poor Bernardin de Saint Pierre's question on his death-bed, and receiving no answer but a sigh, "*Que ferait une âme isolée dans le ciel même?*"

And without going to the other extreme, what could a poor isolated soul do at Concave House? I was tired of hearing the French Grammar travestied, and the English one libelled (for truth was not yet established into libel by the wisdom of the English Legislature.) I was tried even of the high honour done me, of being deputed to revise and correct the eldest Miss Sherwood's letters to her father in India, although that young lady was two years my senior, and eight years my precursor at Concave House; for, to say the

truth, I found this, like many other worldly distinctions, very dull work, as during the whole course of my having been "genteel letter-writer" to Miss Sherwood, an appointment which I had now held for eighteen months, I had extorted but one good laugh, in the way of emolument, from this anything but sinecure; and that was upon the occasion of one of the letters to Colonel Sherwood from his daughter, submitted to me in the proof, commencing, "*My dear Papa.*" I was not before aware, I said, that her father had been such a buck, and a great many more equally admirable and first-rate *mots* about Sherwood Forest, Robin Hood, and Little John, ran through the school, though envy kept us silent as to Friar Tuck.

I was more tired still, of seeing Miss James every day as the clock struck twelve, march into school, preceded by Jemima, with a cup of good, fat chocolate, and a plate of rusks, which, after seating herself at the board of green cloth, she had the inhumanity leisurely to sip before our hungry eyes, while she heard the poetical class. Poetical! did I say? Helicon forgive me! but so Miss James called it, professing herself at the same time *so fond* of poetry—a partiality which was generally suspected by the elder girls (who were very proficient in that branch of natural history, from a course of curling their hair at the curate, and watching whether the officers were attentive at church—to the sermon, I mean), and even by some of the younger girls, to have arisen from the

fact of the P in Poetry, and that in Perkins being cousin-germans. The poetry, then,—since poetry Miss James called it—consisted of “Young’s Night Thoughts,” and “Thomson’s Seasons.” Oh! how tired I was of hearing that—

“The lovely young Lavinia once had friends!”

when I was precisely in the same predicament, and mine were now all so far away! It is true, Lady Plantagenet had been very kind in coming to see me, and a great relief and pleasure it was to see her and her charming daughters, for the refreshing difference that exists between well-bred and vulgar people is, that the former are always easy, but never free; whereas, the latter are always free, and never easy. Lady Plantagenet had very kindly repeatedly asked me to go and stay a week or fortnight with them, but I had always had the courage and self-denial to refuse; for I felt convinced that, once emancipated from “Concave House,” though only for one hour, I never could return to it. She also very considerably sent me heaps of trout and game; but, somehow or other, the one swam, and the other flew, wide of the mark, as only the solitary wing of a cold pheasant, or a very juvenile trout, ever found its way to my plate at dinner-time, though I must do Miss James the justice to say, she had long threatened to ask me to dine with her, some day, “*as a return!*” as they say in England, for all the game and fruit her ban-

quets were indebted to me for ; as poor Nelly, knowing my passion for fruit and flowers, used often to come in state, in a hackney coach, with Jeffs at a respectful distance on the box, and nearly all Covent Garden Market inside.

But Miss James had too tender a regard for my health ever to allow more than a single peach, nectarine, or half a bunch of grapes to tamper with it. Like Queen Philippa sucking the poison, the rest she generally consumed herself. Mrs. and Miss Waltham had also very kindly often pressed me to go and stay with them, and Mr. Waltham, though now a full-fledged M.P., and always greatly pre-occupied, being about to speak on the great Molasses Question, or the great Soap Bill, or some other great bubble of the day, still good-naturedly found time to come and see "his old pupil," as he used to call me, and used to smuggle me in "*Atala*," the *Waverley* Novels, and "*L'Hermite de la Chaussée d'Antin*," (oh ! faint not, most proper reader, nor consign me to a region which is already over-populated—at least, if only one half have arrived that have been piously sent thither), but he also brought me "*Childe Harold*," "*The Bride of Abydos*," and "*The Corsair*," which last took such a hold upon my imagination, that I got them by heart, and have never been able to get them out of it since.

Judge, then, how additionally I suffered from James, Thomson, and Dr. Young. Such was my writhing sense of the deadly dulness of their daily

aggressions, that I even tried to get up a revolution among the big girls in favour of "The Traveller," and "The Deserted Village;" but here another disappointment awaited me, they one and all refused to petition Miss James to let them supersede Dr. Young's hurdy-gurdy, and Mr. Thomson's barometer; they knew nothing of my favourite Goldsmith, except to ask "Was he the man who had written the abridgment of the 'History of England' in use at Concave House?" and when I said he was, from that moment there was a prejudice against him, which as I said was very unjust, as they did not any of them know one word that was in his history. But still, if they did not know history and those sort of common every-day things, they were deeply versed in the higher branches of science that I knew nothing about—such as the mysteries of cotton-velvet flowers, gum and gold paper, and officers' eyes and epaulettes; for after church of a Sunday, as soon as they had "given in" the text to Miss James, which they were all obliged to write down, we heard no more of the sermon—as the younger girls used to pass the hours from dinner till supper, exclaiming: "Dear me, how hungry I am—*ain't* you?" while the elder ones, though guiltless of Pope, seemed to think with him, that

"The proper study of mankind, is man."

For their questions and answers consisted of such sentences as these:

“Oh! didn’t Fitz Pipeclay look lovely to day?”

“Which is Fitz Pipeclay? the third nearest to us on the left hand side of the gallery, or the one nearest the window with a green pocket-handkerchief?”

“No, you silly thing, neither of them; Fitz Pipeclay is the one with the undaunted blue eyes—that look you through, and the auburn whiskers.”

“But how do you know his name?” asked Miss Sherwood.

“Why—but now promise me upon your honour you won’t tell,” simpered Miss Dickens—the dark-eyed victim of Lieutenant Fitz Pipeclay’s “undaunted eyes” and “auburn whiskers,”—“for then we should have James’s powder, and shot! too I suspect.”

Finding the conversation was taking this confidential turn, I was moving away, when Miss Dickens tossing back her ringlets said, with a laugh:

“You need not go, Miss Sedley, for *lor!* after all it must be known sooner or later, for I am sure Fitz Pipeclay won’t wait another half year; and even if *Pa* won’t forgive me, it’s very little consequence, for I’ve got £10,000 of my own, that *Granma* Hodges left me. Well, my dears, you must know that the second Sunday after I had seen Algernon at church (Fitz Pipeclay’s name is Algernon, isn’t it *a love of a name?*) going out, I happened to drop my Prayer-book—now you need not look so wicked, Sherry, for I assure you it was quite accidental—Fitz picked it up, and gave it me back with such a look! and such a bow! and when

I got home and opened it, I found his own dear delightful card in it, all *scented* with musk (!) and where do you think he'd placed it? why, just opposite that answer in the 'Solemnization of matrimony' which, to the question of 'Wilt thou have this woman for thy wedded wife?' says, 'I will.' Well, the following Sunday, as luck would have it, it rained, Algernon's friend, Colonel Martinet, stepped forward with an umbrella, which he opened and offered to Miss James, while Fitz Pipeclay offered me one, and in doing so slipped a letter into my hand."

"How very impertinent! Of course you returned it to him?" interrupted I.

"Indeed I did no such thing; *lor*, how silly you are, Mirry Sedley; no one would think you were nearly sixteen and a half."

"Well?" eagerly interrogated Miss Sherwood, and the rest of the auditory.

"Well, my dears," resumed Miss Dickens, "all that remains for me to tell you is, that from that hour my fate was fixed; matters went on like a house on fire between Algernon and me; and if all goes well—" But here Miss Dickens whispered to her friend, whose only reply was, as her very hair grew redder!—

"*Lor!* Mary Anne, but *ain't* you afraid?"

"Afraid!" echoed Miss Dickens, "no, you silly thing, what should I be afraid of?" added she, profanely quoting Scripture. "Don't you know that 'perfect love casteth out fear,' as Mr. Musgrave,

your handsome curate, tells us, for he's your *beau*, Caroline."

This conversation had taken place in the garden: I turned away down to the pond, with a feeling of very great contempt and disgust, which was both unjust and unkind, as these poor girls were really very much to be pitied, and very little to be blamed; even of trivial external acquirements they knew scarcely anything; and, as for their hearts and minds, they had remained totally neglected; how then should they have a single right principle, or proper feeling, in every human soil? Nature merely sows the seed, be it evil or be it good; but the culture, weeding, and training, she leaves to others; neglected, the very best, though it never can become actual poison, yet will be wasted into a prodigal and unappropriated luxuriance; while the very worst, with proper culture and great care, may be irrigated and trained into a beneficial produce of great value.

From this conversation I, however, learnt one thing; which was, *why* the young ladies at Concave House were not allowed to receive letters without Miss James's inspection; her prophetic spirit had foreseen that Pipeclay might lurk in every paper, and lovers in every letter. I had also learnt another thing by it, thereby verifying the proverb—that even from the most foolish we may learn something—for Miss Dickens had called Mr. Fitz Pipeclay "lovely!" This was the first time I had ever *heard* of "a lovely

man!" and what renders the circumstance more remarkable is, that I have never yet *seen* one. Altogether, I was very uncomfortable, and no wonder; for, as the saying runs, "I had gained a wrinkle," and that is never agreeable to any woman; at one moment, I was on the point of going in and acquainting Miss James with the whole of the Pipeclay tactics; but the next moment, I was deterred by my strong detestation of the odious character of a spy and a tell-tale; and, to say the truth, I had not been rather more than two years at Concave House, without imbibing a little of that prudent English feeling, which always begins when only *others* are in danger, with, "what is it to me?" and ends with, "I had better not interfere, I shall only get myself into a mess." One decision, however, I had even then come to, and experience has since confirmed it; which is, that no one is fit to keep a school for girls who has not, in the first place, been born and educated as a gentlewoman; and who in the next place, is not a mother herself, ay, and the mother of living, growing children too; which opinion was even strengthened at the time by my raising my eyes, and seeing a little girl of about seven years old, of the name of Jessy Fane, tugging away with all her tiny strength, trying to unmoor a little pleasure-boat that was chained to the bank.

"Come away, Jessy," cried I, "you will either fall in, or wet your feet, and catch cold."

"Oh, no, I shan't, Mirry, I have just done it," said she, with another tug.

“Now do come away, there’s a good girl.”

“Well, I will in a moment to please you, only just let me get it undone first, for I don’t like to give it up when I have just got the spike out; “and so saying, with another long desperate tug, her little hands lacerated, and her cheeks like scarlet, out came the plug. Away went the boat adrift, and back fell poor little Jessy headlong into the water—also carried away by the current! the other girls, who with Madame Beccaccia were at the other end of the garden,—all began to scream when they heard Jessy’s scream, and saw what had happened, and to run in all directions, calling for Tibbs, the gardener. Luckily, female attire in those days was not the amateur balloons that petticoats are in these, and I had nothing on but a straw bonnet, and muslin scarf, which I soon flung off, and myself, into the pond; and though never having learnt to swim at that time, yet having lived in an island nearly all my life, where I had heard so many stories of swimming and diving, and persons being rescued from drowning, that I fancied myself theoretically a sort of honorary mermaid.

“Don’t move, Jessy,” cried I, as I struck out for the centre of the pond, “try and lie on your back quite still, you are too light to sink, and I’ll soon be up with you.”

“Oh, thank you, thank you, Mirry,” sobbed the poor child, “but you’ll be drowned, too; go back—go back.”

“Nonsense, my dear child, not a bit of it; I’m delighted to have a cold bath once more, only I should prefer it without duck-weed,” said I, laughing, with the intent of diverting Jessy’s attention from her own perils.

“Oh! you are right, Mirry, I do float now that I keep quietly on my back.”

“Ah!” said I, much relieved by seeing Jessy safely floating on the dense duck-weed, and not a little delighted to find how well I could swim; “depend upon it, Jessy, it is always best to make as little fuss as possible, whether one is in hot water or cold.

“Is it?” said Jessy, innocently.

“Ay, marry is it,” rejoined I, sententiously, as I came up with her, and passed my arm quietly round her waist.

“Oh, Mirry! dear, darling Mirry!” said she, now struggling to throw her arms round my neck, “how good you always are to me!”

“Hush!” said I, “now be quiet, or we shall both go to the bottom, for I must take you under my left arm, and that leaves me but one to swim with;” at this the poor child almost kept in her breath, as I turned about with my prize, and made for the bank, where, by this time, Miss James and Miss Omeny, and Tibbs the gardener, were assembled, and also Helen Penrose, sobbing and crying, and the skirts of her frock wringing wet as far as her knees, for seeing me in the middle of the pond, she was convinced I should be

drowned, and had got as far as her knees into the water to try and help me—when Mr. Perkins, to the great detriment of a pair of nankeen tights and pumps, had pulled her out; for it is a remarkable fact, let what would occur in Miss James's "Establishment," that gentleman happened, by the greatest good fortune, but at the same time the merest accident, always to be on the spot, ready to tender his services *professionally*.

Although it was a sultry day in August, the water was intensely cold, and from Jessy's weight, my left arm was so completely numbed, that I could with difficulty gain the bank; however, thank heaven! I at length succeeded, and Tibbs kneeling down, stooped over the bank and lifted Jessy out of the water; while Mr. Perkins, who was really *au fond* a most good-natured person, giving loose to his humanity, sacrificed the remainder of his tights, and holding out both hands to me drew me out of the water, a service which I was base enough to repay by splashing from head to foot, perhaps, take it all in all, the most exquisite get up that had ever issued from Seidlitz Lodge; but even this did not damp Mr. Perkins's philanthropic ardour, for breaking off a branch of willow, which he twined round my streaming hair, he said:

"Really, Miss Sedley, you are quite an *ero*, and has there hare no laurels ere, I must crown you with willer."

“ Oh ! how cruel of you, Mr. Perkins,” said I, with an arch glance at Miss James and Miss Omeny, which sent all the girls off into a titter, “ to make any lady wear the willow.”

Seeing the “ clouds gathering upon Diana’s brow ” at this wicked speech of mine, Glauber Rodolphus hastened to despatch one eye, as ambassador, to Miss James’s cap, and the other as *chargé-d’affaires* to Miss Omeny’s wig, as he said with that convulsive, grappling, iron sort of laugh, which people resort to when the case is desperate :

“ Ha ! ha ! ’pon my honor yes—that is, no ; eaven forbid ! hany lady should wear the willer for me ! I should a deal prefer making hany dear cretur wear the horange-blossom,” said he, looking Juans and Lovelaces over the corners, as he drew up his collar, and anchored with a lear full in Miss James’s eyes ; but however she might yield to sentiment, she never forgot scholastic discipline. So advancing towards me with her arms folded, and delivering herself of that portentous a-hem ! which always preceded one of the fiats, she said :

“ Really, Miss Miriam Sedley, I fear I shall never cure you of that most *ungenteel* and unlady-like habit of giving way to every impulse : the unrestrained movements alone, which this pernicious habit engenders, are very objectionable. Before you jump into ponds, you should recollect that you are not a boy.”

"I can't help that, Ma'am," said I, curtly, flinging down the lachrymose wreath, with which Mr. Perkins had encircled my head.

"Besides," resumed Miss James, "you set such a bad example to my younger pupils. There is Miss Jessey Fane, and Miss Helen Penrose, at this very moment hugging you like two young bears. All those demonstrative ways are so very unlady-like."

"Was I, then, to let poor little Jessey drown, Ma'am, because it is not lady-like for a young lady to swim in a duck pond?"

"Certainly not, Miss Sedley: you should have called Tibbs. You should also have despatched Jemima for *professional* assistance, which, in *my* establishment, is always within reach: and you might, as soon as this very naughty and disobedient little girl was rescued from the water, have expressed your congratulations in a mild lady-like manner, without all this vulgar crying and kissing."

In a tone so humble, that its irony was not detected, I assured Miss James that, should *she* ever have the misfortune to fall into that, or any other water, in my presence, I would act precisely as she enjoined. And Mr. Perkins, who was beginning himself to receive several hostile messages, from the diverse splashes of duck-weed that tessellated his nankeens, here interfered *professionally*, saying, that "with Miss Sedley's excitable *tempratoore*, he should order her instantly into a warm bed—and also Miss Fane and

Miss Penrose," while Tibbs was despatched to Seidlitz Lodge for a relay of nankeens and white silk stockings for its intrepid owner. I was not at all sorry for the prescription, as, at five o'clock, Mr. Perkins had ordered (*professionally*) some roast chicken and hot wine-and-water to be sent up to us.

"Dear me," said the ever-moonbeamy and lady-like Flippens, "were you not terribly afraid, Miss Sedley?"

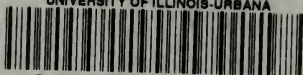
"Yes, that Jessey would be drowned," said I, as I turned on my side, and fell into a delicious sleep.

END OF VOL. II.

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